



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

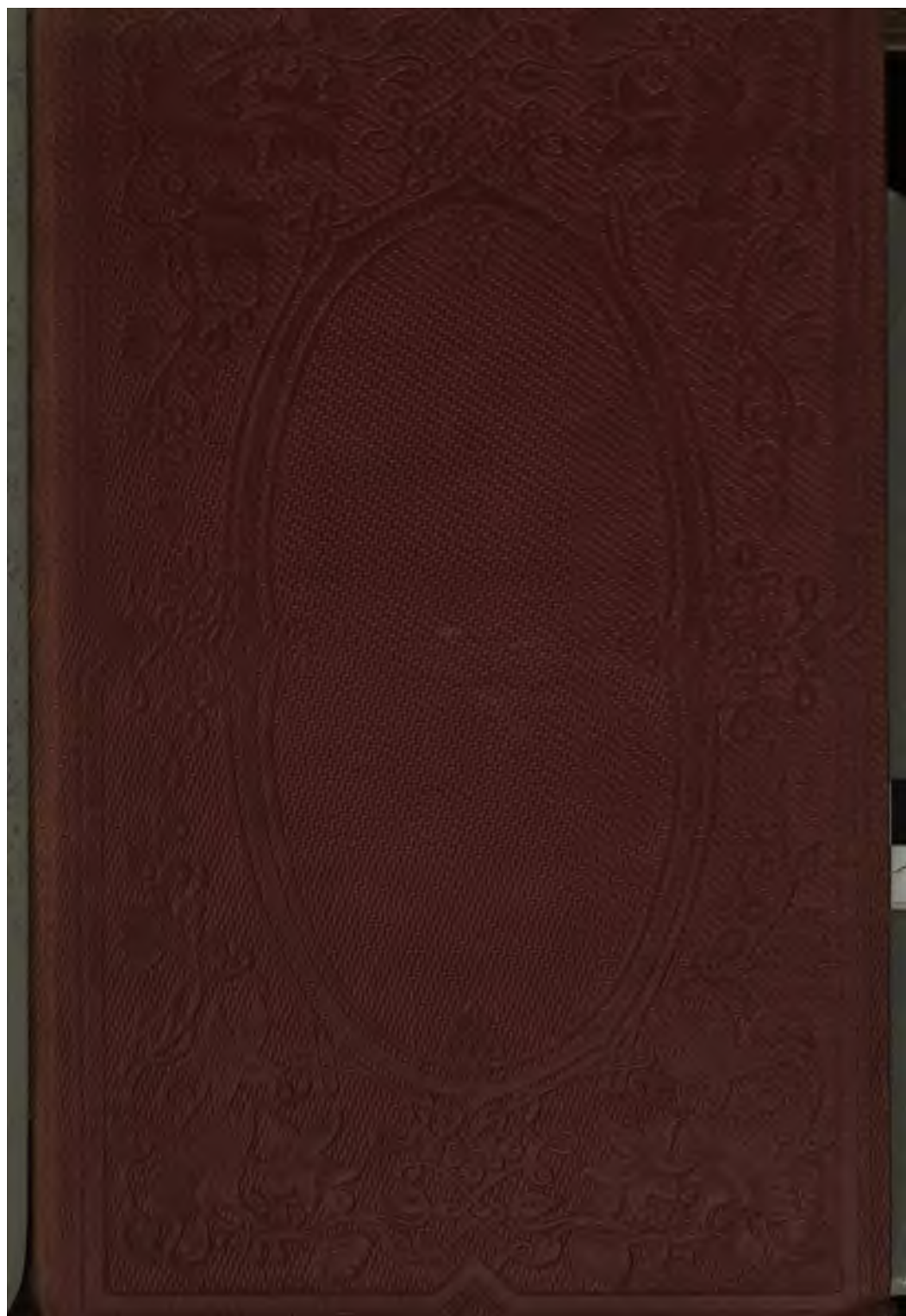
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600069383Z





600069383Z



1

LEONORA.

BY

THE HONOURABLE MRS. MABERLY,

AUTHOR OF "THE LOVE MATCH," "MELANTHE," "DISPLAY," "LEONTINE,
OR THE COURT OF LOUIS XV."

ETC. ETC.

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

MACBETH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

1856.

249. w. 192.

[*The Right of Translation is Reserved.*]

**M'CORQUODALE AND CO., PRINTERS, LONDON—
WORKS, NEWTON.**

PREFACE.

THE character of "Leonora" in the following tale is taken from real life; her story is therefore a biography—not a romance. All the principal events are true, and, so far from being exaggerated, are considerably softened down.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *March*, 1856.



LEONORA.

CHAPTER I.

IN a large room in one of the principal hotels of Florence, sat Sir Edward Devereux, a young English baronet, who had been for some weeks residing in that city. Short, however, as had been the time since his arrival had been hailed with delight by the brilliant society at that moment congregated at Florence, it had amply sufficed to win for him golden opinions from those by whom he had not been previously known, as well as to confirm the very pleasing impression which was sure to remain upon the mind of all who could boast of a more length-

ened acquaintance with him. Young, gay, good-looking, and rich, Sir Edward Devereux easily commanded the admiration of the world; but the esteem and respect of the more worthy part of it, were but a just tribute to the many fine qualities he possessed, to the uprightness of his mind, and the genuine goodness of heart, which might be traced in the smallest of his words or actions. An extremely popular person is too often one who is very insignificant, or very insincere; but Sir Edward ran no risk of being included in the category of such as justly deserve these imputations.

Endowed with so many personal and mental advantages, it might be supposed that Sir Edward Devereux was perfectly happy, that not a shade of gloom ever settled on his fine manly brow, or a feeling of sorrow chased the smile from his lip. Such, however, if formerly the case, was certainly far otherwise at the moment of the opening of this tale. A picture of the deepest dejection—bowed down by a grief he could

neither overcome nor conceal, this brilliant favourite of society sat, alone and unheeded, in his solitary room. It was very late at night, and the distant parts of the chamber were lost in the darkness; for the one candle that burnt upon the table by his side, merely served to show with distinctness the tall, slight figure of him who watched—watched and mourned, as it appeared, alternately, for at one moment he would raise his head as if intent upon catching the smallest sound, and then again bury it in his clasped hands, which were strained convulsively across his forehead, and tears—large and frequent tears—forced their way, and fell upon the marble table on which he leaned. Such unwonted and overpowering emotion must have some dreadful cause; for man in his brilliant youth and health is not prone to weep.

And a dreadful cause there was that now weighed down that stately head, and drew the burning tear from the breaking heart; mourning,

alas ! too late the deed that the hand had done. That morning Sir Edward Devereux had fought a duel ; and his adversary and former friend, the young Marchese Colonna, now lay at the point of death.

He did well to weep ; that true-hearted, brave, and noble-minded man—unheeding the applause of the giddy world, who saw in his act but the flashings of a spirit too high to bear a taunting word. In a moment of passion he had yielded, and galled by the irritation of an insult in public, to which the advice and support of injudicious friends speedily added their pernicious effects, he had madly had recourse to that miscalled vindication of his honour, from which, in his calmer moments, he would have recoiled ; and, sacrificing a principle he had hitherto strenuously advocated, “that nothing could justify a duel,” he had fought, and was wretched for life. In vain he called to mind the usages of the world and the sophistry of man. No law of God could he claim as per-

mitting the deed that he had done; and he knew that the brand of the murderer was upon him, and for ever. His feelings were almost beyond endurance; and the helplessness of his position rendered them still more dreadful. It was one that might well unman the bravest, and it is not surprising that Sir Edward Devereux, whose tenderness of heart fully equalled his tenderness of conscience, should have been completely overpowered as the first news of the very dangerous state of his late antagonist reached him.

The duel had been caused by some remarks of a political nature made by Sir Edward, and of course, duly repeated and magnified by the friends and adherents of the Marchese, a passionate, hot-headed young man, who, although a great friend and admirer of Sir Edward, secretly believed that all Englishmen were in their hearts devoted to the liberal cause in Italy, a cause which he most fervently abhorred. This was quite sufficient foundation for a

quarrel, even had the Marchese not been influenced, as was the case, by hidden motives of jealousy. Irritated by these, which he was too proud to confess, his violent temper quickly urged him to take offence, and, regardless of former ties, or any other consideration, the challenge was given, and the meeting immediately arranged, which had produced so lamentable a result. At the first shot the Marchese had fallen, wounded in the chest; and, although it was not known at the moment that the wound was mortal, the news was soon afterwards conveyed to Sir Edward by one of the many officious friends always in attendance upon the great, and he had passed the day in all the misery of suspense and despair.

As night approached, however, a gleam of hope seemed to arise. The Marchese had rallied; and, although the physicians announced that it was but a temporary amendment, the agonized heart of Sir Edward had caught gladly at the slightest chance : and the

whole evening had been passed in going or sending backwards and forwards from his own house to that of the sufferer, in order to obtain the earliest intelligence of any change that might take place. . The latest accounts had not been as favourable as those which had preceded them, and it was with renewed grief and anxiety that Sir Edward had again despatched his servant to the house of the Marchese, with a letter, full of the outpourings of his breaking heart, which he was to convey to the wounded man, in case he should be able to receive it.

A longer time than usual had elapsed, since Louis, the confidential servant of Sir Edward, had departed on his mission, and he began to count the moments with a feverish terror, which added to the misery of the hour. He had sat so long by the table in the centre of the room, that the candle was burnt nearly to the socket before he perceived it : in a few moments more he

would have found himself in utter darkness. Partly to obviate the prospect of this additional discomfort, as well as in the hope of sooner becoming aware of the return of his messenger, he rose from his seat, and drawing back the curtain that shaded one of the windows, he stepped out upon the balcony, from whence an uninterrupted view of the whole length of the street could be obtained. No one was visible, and not a sound broke upon the stillness of the beautifully clear night, which was now very far advanced. Countless stars glittered in the deep blue heavens, and as Sir Edward came out upon the balcony, the soft breeze played refreshingly upon his burning brow, and lifted the heavy masses of dark brown hair which hung in a somewhat disordered state upon it. He raised his swollen eyes for a moment to the scene of beauty above his head.

“An Italian night,” he murmured, “and a heart like this!” and he put his hand upon

his heart with an expression of intense pain. No words could have so well defined the contrast of the outward calm upon which his eye rested, with the agony he felt. He said no more, but leaned his arms upon the balustrade before him, and gazed intently up the street towards the corner round which he knew Louis would make his first appearance on his way home. It was not until some time afterwards that his hopes were realized; but at length a figure was seen rapidly approaching, and, hurrying from the hotel, Sir Edward met his servant in the street.

“What news, Louis?” was the hurried question he could scarcely articulate, for the countenance of his messenger announced no tidings of hope.

“Bad, Sir Edward—very bad!” said Louis, shaking his head;—“the Marquis had rallied a good deal, but a fainting fit came on, and he was all but gone. Now, however, he is better again, and prays of you to come to him.”

“Me!” exclaimed Sir Edward in a tone of surprise; and a very visible shudder passed over him as he fixed his eyes upon the face of his servant, who answered rapidly:—

“Yes—yes, he implores it! I saw him myself, and he charged me to bring you, and instantly: indeed, Sir Edward, there is not a moment to lose.”

The manner of the speaker was so urgent, that it overcame any scruples Sir Edward might have had as to intruding himself at such a moment into the presence of the man whose death-blow had been given by his hand. He hesitated no longer, and, desiring Louis to await his return, he forthwith took his way to the house of the Marchese.

CHAPTER II.

DEATH, with its unmistakeable impressions, was hovering over the superb palace into which, changed by his hand to the house of mourning, Sir Edward Devereux now entered. The scared faces of the numerous attendants, their hushed voices and noiseless footsteps, all added a separate pang to his tortured heart, as he hastily followed the servant who was to conduct him to the bedside of the Marchese.

It was nearly broad daylight, but the windows all remained closed as they had been during the night, and the dimly lighted apartments looked still more gloomy and sad from their vast size and magnificent furniture. A chill of horror passed over Sir Edward as he entered the ball-room, which it was necessary to cross

in order the sooner to reach the apartment of the Marchese. It was but a few days—it seemed now but a moment—since he had seen that splendid room in a blaze of light, and a gay and brilliant crowd moving joyously over the inlaid floor, upon which his own trembling footsteps now sounded with a heavy distinctness that echoed painfully to his ear above the solemn stillness of the house. At length the fatal room was reached, and on the bed of death lay the sinking form of him who, but a few hours since, had stood unrivalled as a type of the most perfect manly beauty.

Filippo, Marchese Colonna, although only eight-and-twenty, had long been esteemed the handsomest man of his day. He was a Roman by birth, but chiefly resided at Florence, which he preferred to his native city, and where his great wealth, as well as uncommon personal attractions and accomplishments, had not failed to give him that pre-eminence in society which he so fully deserved. Now all was fading fast,

and as Sir Edward Devereux approached the bed on which he lay, and beheld the ghastly look of that face he had last seen resplendent in beauty, he knew that all hope was over. He could not speak, but, sinking on his knees by the side of the wounded man, he took the wan hand that lay upon the coverlid, and bathed it with his tears. Nothing was heard for some time but the deep sobs that he could not restrain. He wept as if his heart was breaking. Unable to utter a syllable, he continued kneeling by the bedside, when he felt the hand of the Marchese gently press his own, and heard his first feeble words, spoken in an accent of tenderness—

“Edward,” said the Marchese, “be comforted—do not grieve for me. I forgive you—from my heart I forgive you.”

“I feel it,” replied Sir Edward, raising his head; “but, can I ever forgive myself?” and he added in a tone of despair—“Will God ever forgive me the sin that I have committed?”

"God is merciful," answered the Marchese thoughtfully, and with his disengaged hand he tried to make the sign of the cross; but the movement seemed to cause him the most acute pain, for it was almost with a groan that he continued—

"It was the decree of fate, my dear Edward. I was always something of a fatalist. Promise me, you will not reproach yourself more than you can help. Why should you?—our chances were equal; why then accuse yourself? I was the aggressor—I insisted on the duel; it has turned against me, and I submit."

"Oh, Filippo!" cried Sir Edward, "your generous words but wring my heart the more—never shall I know a happy moment again!"

"Edward," said the dying man, if such are your views of the long life before you, you will embitter my last moments. Promise me to overcome this sorrow. Remember you might have been in my place—if so, I should

not have sat down for ever in my despair. I would have tried to live for the happiness of others. I would have tried to think of you—to love you—to pray for you. Will you not do as much for me, dear Edward?" And he looked up affectionately into his face as he continued—"do not forget me, but pray for me when I am gone. I have committed many sins, but I acknowledge them humbly. I am not hardened, Edward, so pray for me—pray for my soul when I am gone from the earth. But I forget," he added, checking himself, "you do not belong to our faith—you are a Protestant."

"Yes," replied Sir Edward, "but believe me, Filippo, my heart will never forget you. I may not soon be able to conquer my great sorrow; but the memory of you and your many noble qualities will be dearer to me than all. Filippo, do not fear; I never, never shall cease to love and remember you—no, not even for a moment."

"It is sweet comfort," said the Marchese, slow-

ly raising his splendid dark eyes to heaven, "to be the first in the thoughts of those we love;" and then he added, with an expression of sorrow his voice had not yet betrayed; "it might not always have been my lot. It is better to die now—it is well."

As he ceased speaking, a look of such agony overspread his face, that Sir Edward hastily started to his feet, and put his hand upon the pulse of the sufferer, who had closed his eyes and seemed about to expire. The languid pulse, however, still beat as before, and in a few moments the Marchese appeared to have recovered from his emotion; for it was with increased firmness that he turned his head towards his companion, and said—

"Sit down again, Edward, and listen to me. You have said that you loved me, and I believe you. I am going to put your love and friendship to the test. I am going to confide to you the great secret of my life. I may con-

fide in you, I know." And he looked kindly and anxiously at him as he spoke.

"Can you doubt it, Filippo?" replied Sir Edward warmly. "But no—you cannot—you do not doubt me. I feel it. You know that with me your secret is safe."

"I do;—I will speak to you as I would to a brother, or to a second self," replied the Marchese, softly. "Look at this address. You know the lady. Promise me, when I am gone, that you will deliver this with your own hands—this, and other packets which I will give you." And as he spoke, he with difficulty drew from beneath his pillow a letter, which, even in his agony, he had contrived to write and seal.

"Leonora Stratford!" cried Sir Edward, in a tone of the greatest surprise. "What! Miss Stratford, who was lately here with her father?"

"The same," replied the Marchese;—"you would not have guessed it, Edward; but that woman I loved even better than my life."

“You—Filippo!” exclaimed Sir Edward, with a start.

“Yes,” replied his companion, covering his eyes with his hand. “And she—and Miss Stratford—?” was the rejoinder, and the inquiry was whispered rather than spoken.

“And she loved me: at least I thought so,” slowly replied the Marchese. “Oh, Edward! no words can even tell you my love for her—or what that woman is; that woman—whom I have loved, doated on, worshipped, as no human being ever worshipped another. For more than two years we have been all in all to each other. She loved me, even as I loved her: at least so she seemed to do; and for two years I was happy—oh! happy beyond all words to tell—too happy to remain so for ever!”

“Filippo,” said Sir Edward, growing still more pale than he had been before, “you astonish—you shock me more than I can express! Miss Stratford, who was always

supposed to be a paragon of perfection—who carried her reserve even to prudery?”

“Because there was a secret to hide,” replied the Marchese, with a faint smile, “and that secret I guarded better than I have done my life. Had any one dared but to breathe a suspicion of her, I would have killed him on the spot. And you, Edward—you must not think her guilty—more guilty than she was. Mine was the greatest sin, for I deceived her—basely deceived her: not with my heart, but by my words; for, until too late, I still denied my marriage. She thought me free when first she said she loved me; and when, at last, the fatal truth had reached her, she at once bade me adieu for ever.” For one moment he paused, and a look of inexpressible anguish passed over his face, as though the recollection he had called up was too terrible to bear; then he added vehemently—

“She did not weep or pray, but sternly commanded me never to seek her more. She

might as easily have bidden the frantic wave stand back, or called upon the raging storm to hush itself to calm. By every art in her power she avoided my presence; but all to no avail. I followed her, threatened—persecuted—terrified her into listening to my words, or seeing me die before her. She could not elude me. The whole world was not large enough to hide her from me; for I loved her, and from a love like mine there was no escape. Oh, Leonora!” he continued, with a passionate tenderness of tone that wrung the heart of his hearer, “how I have loved you! Half angel, half demon—my very soul was yours! Only whilst you loved me, was life precious to me; and yet I tell you, Edward,” he added, turning his eyes hurriedly to his companion, “it was a madness, an infatuation I could not resist. You shudder—you look grave—but remember we Italians think it no sin to love, if love be true; and God only knows how true mine was, and how strong. It was stronger than scorn, stronger

than pride, stronger than every thing; for even while I doated on her I saw her faults: and they were faults I could not pity, could not respect; too soon I found her cold, avaricious, false—the truth fell on my heart like ice—and yet I loved her the same: loved her as no man will ever love again.”

“But surely to you she was true—to you, Filippol!” exclaimed Sir Edward, still more horrified at the idea implied by the words of the Marchese. “Surely such love, even guilty as it was, must have been valued; appreciated as the warmth and sincerity of such a feeling deserved.”

“So it was to a certain degree,” replied the Marchese sadly; “but a love like mine is like fire to water, compared to that of a woman who calculates and looks forward. Alas! alas! Leonora did both. When she forgave me my treacherous conduct towards her, and gave me back the heart she could not quite take from me, it was *on conditions* that did not speak

a love as fervent as my own. She made me swear my marriage should be annulled, that I might make her my wife; and exacted a promise that until then no one ever should even suspect our secret. There might have been a shadow of reason in that, and you know not how implicitly I obeyed; but, as time went on, other thoughts were betrayed in which I had no share,—thoughts of future grandeur, of future wealth, of some splendid marriage which she was sure to make, and to accomplish which an unsullied reputation was necessary. I ask you, Edward, was there not falsehood of mind towards me in this? Was it not enough to drive me to madness, to make me hate her if I could?"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Sir Edward, with a shudder, as he marked the looks of despair and rage that flitted across the wan face of his friend. "And you could know all this, feel this, and yet love her the same?"

"More wildly than ever," said the Marchese

sadly. "The very thought of losing her drove me to despair. I would have done any thing for her—too gladly married her myself; but, as you know, I am already married. Oh, Edward! if you could conceive all that I have attempted for that woman, the efforts that I have made, the monstrous sums that I have lavished, in order to get my odious marriage dissolved, that I might make Leonora my wife! But it was impossible, and from the moment she knew it was so, I perceived a difference in her love. Not much—not very much, perhaps; but, to a passion like mine, a shadow is enough. And she has left me now! Left Florence, when she might have stayed; left me under pretence of going with her father, who has just inherited a property in England! Edward," he added, in a dry short voice, as if concentrating all his ideas of misery, "this showed the future: it was a shadowing forth of sorrow I could not have endured. Worldly designs, ambitious hopes! what had they to do with a lovelike mine?

It is better to die now. I could not have lived without her: one crime would have been added to another. Edward, my friend, I thank you: you have saved me from another sin."

The soft, affectionate manner in which the unhappy man uttered these words, as he feebly grasped the hand of Sir Edward, drew fresh tears from the eyes of the latter, who hastily replied, "I cannot believe any woman would be so base. You have deceived yourself, my dear Filippo—you must have done so: and, as to her leaving Florence, it was only on account of business; they were to return in the autumn: Mr. Stratford told me so himself."

"Yes! with a rich husband, perhaps, for Leonora," said the Marchese grinding his teeth with rage; "but it is over now. I awake from my dream; it has been a happy one, though short. Edward," he continued after a pause, during which he seemed to have lost the little feverish strength which had hitherto supported him; "I feel I am sinking fast: promise me

one thing before I go. I trust you, I depend on you. Promise me that you will do what I ask of you."

"I will," replied Sir Edward, solemnly; "I swear it! You may trust to me."

"I know it," said the Marchese, hoarsely. "Do this, then. As soon as the grave closes upon me, return to England and see Leonora. Give her that letter, and the packages I have desired my servant to take to you. There are jewels in them fit for a queen. She was afraid to wear them here, but in England they will not be recognised. Tell her to wear them for my sake; for the sake of him who loved her—whose dying thought was of her, and for her alone. Oh, Edward!" he added, his voice failing almost to a whisper, and the tears streaming down his face, "tell her all this—tell her to pray for me, to remember my love—tell her all that I have told you; and, Edward, if you love me, mark how she bears it—how she bears the news of my death. If she

mourns for me, bless her—watch over her for my sake; but if she forgets me,” and, half raising himself on his side, he ground his teeth and grasped the hand of Sir Edward as he spoke, “or if ever she attempts to deceive another man, and dares to be his wife, I charge you—spurn her as she deserves; and were you to stand behind her at the altar where she pledges her perjured troth, whisper in her ear, ‘Filippo Colonna!’”

As he uttered these words, the unhappy man, totally exhausted, sunk back upon his pillow and became insensible; and, notwithstanding every effort on the part of Sir Edward and his attendants, it was long before consciousness was restored. For some time it seemed as if his spirit had really fled, he lay so still and rigid; the statue-like beauty of his head and throat growing every moment more striking. At length he slowly revived, but in such a state of weakness, his voice could scarcely be heard. He appeared fully aware that his

end was drawing near; for, as Sir Edward bent over him, he begged that the priest whom he had sent for might be instantly admitted.

With a heart bursting with sorrow, Sir Edward hung over the dying man, and, passionately uttering a blessing and a prayer, pressed his lips upon his forehead. It was already cold and damp with the dews of death. A murmured blessing, and the faintly breathed word, "Farewell!" were the last sounds that reached the ear of Sir Edward, as he tore himself from the bedside of his expiring friend. As he reached the door of the apartment, he met the priest carrying the host. A very short time afterwards, the holy father re-appeared in the ante-room, where Sir Edward, with the physicians and other attendants, had remained. His hasty summons, and the tears upon his cheek, too plainly told what his voice refused to utter. All was over. Filippo Colonna was dead!

CHAPTER III.

IT was nearly three months after the mournful event recorded in the last chapter had taken place at Florence, that its effects first began to make themselves felt in a very different locality. Few persons could have passed through the peaceful and smiling village of Whittington, and imagined it connected with any scene of violence or of sorrow; or the abode of turbulent spirits likely to be involved in such.

A more romantic or a prettier situation could scarcely have been found; for the village, or rather small town, of Whittington was placed in one of the most beautiful of the southern counties of England. Nothing was wanting to complete the loveliness of the picture, which the first view of the village disclosed. A

bright river, fine undulating ground, and splendid wooded hills in the distance, left little to be desired by the lovers of the picturesque. It was in reality a very beautiful spot, and it appeared as if the inhabitants had resolved to do all in their power to aid the favours which nature had lavished upon it, by taking care that their handiwork should as little as possible disfigure its appearance. There was not in the whole village an ugly house or building to be seen. Every cottage, even the poorest, had its little railed-in garden, its porch covered with honeysuckle, and a vine or rose-tree trained against the wall of the house. All was neat and in order, and rejoiced the heart of the passer-by; for the desire to please, and a thankful appreciation of even the most simple bounties of Providence, tell of higher feelings than the mere love of show.

It was not, however, only by the poorer classes that the ornamental portions of the village of Whittington had been so carefully fostered;

for there were dwellings in great numbers, visible on all sides, that denoted a much more wealthy community, and added a great deal to the importance of the place. Besides an extremely pretty church, the white spire of which stood out beautifully in front of a large rocky hill studded with fine old oak and chestnut trees, and the very comfortable looking rectory close at hand, almost every little rising ground within view was crowned with some pretty villa, each within its own enclosure, and a few of these were of no inconsiderable extent. Conspicuous, however, amongst all the rest stood one, which, perhaps from its position, seemed superior in every way. It had been built upon a hill so much higher than those around, that the eye naturally rested upon it, but it was chiefly distinguished by a large veranda, which seemed completely to surround the house, and in some degree veiled the vivid white of its nicely painted walls.

This villa was dignified by the name of "The

Hermitage," and was the abode of Miss White, a very distinguished member of the *beau monde* of Whittington, and who generally was better known as Belinda White than by any more formal appellation. A general favourite in society was Belinda White. She was, in fact, a very excellent creature; and it always seemed to those who knew her, that neither Whittington nor any other place could possibly get on without her. She had but one fault, which was that she talked too much; but that was a fault easily overlooked in the village, as it often supplied abundance of conversation; and, besides, it enabled every one to know the secrets of their neighbours. Belinda White told every thing she knew. In the happy, kind-hearted simplicity of her nature, she loved to impart information, and could not bear to keep any thing to herself.

She was by birth a most respectable gentlewoman, without being able to boast of one single great connection, and had for many years lived


at the Hermitage with her widowed father; a man of great learning and accomplishments, who at his death left her sole possessor of his very pretty villa, and a modest little income, which was only just sufficient to ensure her the common comforts of life. Belinda White, however, never wanted any thing, and always contrived to appear more abundantly supplied than she either desired or deserved. She was one of those happy-tempered, amiable persons who are always contented with what they have, instead of fretting and craving for similar possessions to those of their neighbours. She had never in her life been known to ask any one for any thing, however valueless to them; although the begging propensities of many of her friends, did not allow them always to observe the same strict rules of delicacy towards her.

Perhaps this might have been one of the reasons which made Belinda White such a general favourite; or perhaps it was her somewhat weatherbeaten countenance, constantly beam-

ing with as sunny a smile as ever brightened a human face; for it gladdened the heart to look upon it, and gave to features plain enough in themselves, an expression not easily forgotten. It is certain, however, that no individual ever enjoyed a higher degree of popularity in her own sphere than did Belinda White, who had arrived at a tolerably mature middle age, without having made a single enemy by her own fault. Every body loved her—she was welcome to rich and poor; and her visit was as gladly hailed by the owners of the lordly mansions of the neighbourhood, as it was watched for by the sick mourner in the back alley of the town, who, with straining ear, listened for the sound of the well-known patters of Belinda White, as she picked her way over the bricked pathway that skirted the back of the town, all the way by the laundresses' gardens, and led to the cottages of the poor.

Sunshine or rain, it was all the same to Belinda White. She was not a useless fine

lady. Too poor to have the luxury of a carriage, and too warm-hearted to forego the society of others, she would trudge about from one place to another with an activity that, considering her size, was wonderful, and never dream of being ashamed, if caught by some of her fine friends going her rounds in her eternal pattens, with her great umbrella in her hand. There were too many blessings showered upon her head wherever she went, for her to dread the scoffings of the idle or the vain. A nature like this could not fail to attract and to attach, and many friendships and intimacies had Belinda White with the highest and greatest of the land, of whom nothing is more libellous than to say, that they can see no good but in their equals in station and in rank. Merit and nobility of nature will ever be appreciated as they deserve; but they *must exist* to be accepted; for clamour and pretension cannot impose upon those too well read in human nature to be easily deceived.



A proud day it was to Belinda White, whenever the friendship of her neighbours was made manifest to her; the offerings of the heart were to her inestimable treasures, although offerings of a more material nature were constantly showered upon her much more lavishly than she desired. Whenever it was possible such offerings were always declined; but there were some instances where it would neither have been possible nor amiable to have done so, and Belinda White had too much tact ever to make a mistake upon this point. She was not afraid of being thought mercenary, for she knew that she was not so. The occasion upon which her powers of acceptance had been most severely put to the test, was one which had occurred but a few days previous to that upon which Whittington and its inhabitants become identified with the progress of this tale.

Belinda White had been absent for a fortnight, and on her return home, she,

to her inexpressible delight, found the house surrounded by workmen, who were putting the finishing stroke to the very pretty veranda by which it was surrounded. It was a present to her from Lady Glanberris, one of her most particular friends, who had chosen the opportunity of Belinda White's absence on a visit, in order to surprise her on her return. Nothing could have been better devised. Not only was Belinda deeply touched by the thoughtful kindness of the act, but she was also delighted beyond the power of words to express. In the inmost recesses of her heart, a veranda was the thing she had always most longed for; for, perched up as she was on the top of the hill, the glare of the sun was sometimes overpowering; and, now as the welcome shade extended to both sides of her house, she would at all times have a pleasant corner to sit in, and room enough for her huge embroidery frame if she chose to sit out of doors for her work—for she was a great worker, and half the screens and

arm-chairs and footstools in the village were exquisite specimens of her skill.

The veranda certainly was a most welcome and delightful gift, and, to inaugurate it as it deserved, must be the first care of the happy possessor. This was, however, an attempt not to be too lightly undertaken, and Belinda resolved that, before she decided upon any thing, the advice of a few confidential friends should be asked. It was, however, necessary to wait until the whole of the grand addition to her house should be in a perfect state to meet the eye of visitors. It was very tedious to be forced to wait, and still more to wait in solitude; for Belinda resolutely denied herself even the solace of a visit from a neighbour, so intent was she in watching the movements of the workmen who were completing their task. At last every thing was finished, and a covering of green paint, sufficiently ample to have protected it for a century from the weather, having been bestowed, Belinda White sat down under


her spacious veranda, and, with a heart swelling with pride and pleasure, watched the last of the painters wending his way down the walk, loaded with all the implements of his trade, until he disappeared round the turning of the hill.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a happy moment for Belinda White when, without any anxiety, she could ask her friends to come and give their opinion upon the new embellishment to her house. The day after it was completed, there was a meeting of ladies in the village, to make arrangements about a new school which was upon the point of being established at Whittington. Belinda immediately seized upon this opportunity of collecting the ideas of those whom she wished to consult, instead of a more formal summons, which would have had too much the appearance of ostentation for an unpretending being like herself. As soon as the business of the meeting was over, she announced to two or three ladies near her, that luncheon was ready at her

house; and those who did not mind walking up the hill, gladly availed themselves of her offer, and accompanied her home; while others, to whom she afterwards extended her invitation, returned to their houses, in order to obtain the comforts of a pony carriage or a fly. There were three ladies, however, and one gentleman, to whom such a thought seemed preposterous; and they therefore, by returning with Belinda, enjoyed the first *coup d'œil* of the spacious veranda, beneath which the luncheon-table was most invitingly spread.

These ladies, being some of the chief celebrities of Whittington, imagined themselves fairly entitled to be asked to give their opinion upon every thing connected with the town and the society of which it could boast; and, had they not been so consulted, it is possible the smaller passions might have crept out, and envy and detraction shown themselves beneath the edges of the mantle of protection they were pleased to throw over




all that craved its shelter with sufficient humility. The three ladies were each remarkable specimens in their way. Mrs. Blakemore was the superior woman of the village. She was the wife of a retired solicitor of independent means, and fancied that, because lawyers were called "learned," their wives must merit the same distinction. She spoke as if she was an oracle delivering its mystified ideas, and took care never to say any thing joyous or silly. She was tall and angular, with thick black eyebrows, had rather a high red nose, wore her hair in bands, which she thought classical, and generally appeared in a long trailing black silk gown, somewhat rusty in hue. On the present occasion, it was not much enlivened by the dark green ribbons upon her straw bonnet, and elicited many a contemptuous glance from her friend, Mrs. Bedingfield, whom she particularly disliked, and who was her next door neighbour.

Mrs. Bedingfield was slight and fair, and rejoiced in the possession of a fawn-coloured silk

dress, with a faded *paille de riz* bonnet covered with blue corn-flowers. She set herself up for being the lawgiver of Whittington as to *etiquette*, fashions, and dress, though her own ill-made clothes, and frightful yellow curls, somewhat belied her pretensions. She, however, had been abroad, a feat which none of the other Whittington ladies had been able to accomplish; and therefore knew a great many things they did not know, and some perhaps of which she had better have remained ignorant.

The last of the three was Mrs. Percy Linklater, an ingenious lady, who had hitherto baffled every attempt to fathom her history. She had, with her husband, resided for some months at Whittington, where they had taken a very small cottage on the outskirts of the town; but, as they were looked upon as strangers, people were civil and kind to them much beyond their merits, and no one more so than Belinda White; who, of the little that she had, gave to all with an unsparing hand.



These three ladies had accompanied her home on this eventful day, attended by the one single resident gentleman of which Whittington could boast—Captain Blair, an invaluable man in his way. He was a retired half-pay captain, with a stiff leg, and a stiffer black stock, a bronze face, close-cut hair, and tightly buttoned blue frock-coat. His object in life was news; he lived on news, for news, and by news, and was always welcome in every house, particularly in those whose owners never admitted a newspaper for fear of corrupting the morals of the household. Captain Blair would not have corrupted the morals of a midge, although he read the newspapers: he read, and re-read them, before the slumbering community of Whittington had well opened their eyes; for every morning, long ere the postman arrived, the blue coat of the captain was sure to be discernible in the bow window of the little reading-room, and, as the back of the house served for a post-office, he had not long to wait for the budget of news

so necessary to his existence. With what trembling pleasure would he receive it from the withered hands of old Miss Crofts, the post-mistress, and, stretching his lame leg upon the little hard black sofa, devour every atom of intelligence that met his eager search. Nothing was too minute for his observation; for, being blest with a very retentive memory, he might, as he imagined, one day or another turn his information to account. At all events its present use was very apparent, and having duly imbibed his daily stock, the captain as regularly quitted his post before any of the fashionables of Whittington were astir, and prepared to go the rounds of his acquaintance, gently distributing the scattered ideas he had collected ; and secure of, at least once a day, having attentive listeners.

It must not, however, be supposed that he was a disagreeable man, for he was quite the contrary. He would with the utmost *complaisance* give his arm to any lady over

a muddy path or a stony road ; would carry notes or messages from one end of the town to the other; and sit for hours holding skeins of silk or Berlin wool upon his extended fingers, while some purblind dowager or simpering miss pretended to unravel their complications. Decidedly the captain was a most amiable man, only sometimes a little prosy. These were the four notabilities of Whittington, who were the first to behold the glories of the new veranda, and, being soon joined by several other persons, a very merry little party was collected.

A most minute inspection immediately commenced; the arrangement was pronounced to be perfect; and, after an ample measure of applause had been bestowed upon the veranda and its generous donor, Lady Glanberris, many of the party sat down to taste the simple good things provided for them; and those who did not eat luncheon, amused themselves by walking about the very pretty pleasure-ground, which was full of flowers, with arbours and

shady covered walks, judiciously laid out so as to make the shrubberies appear much larger than they really were. There was little to criticize, for all was the picture of neatness, and very cleverly contrived; each tree and each shrub a picture in itself, and serving the purpose for which it had been placed in the position it occupied. Ill-nature, however, found but little vent for its bitterness when directed against Belinda White; for only to be in her presence conveyed the impression that an unkind remark would be out of place if applied to her. It did the heart good to look upon that kind, honest face, although it might be a little too broad, the brown eyes a little too far apart, and the complexion a little too sallow for perfect beauty; but there was an expression of warm-heartedness, of affectionate sympathy in that face, which must have won any heart unleavened by malice or envy.

This day, in particular, Belinda White was radiant with joy, and looked almost

handsome as she sat at the head of her little table, in her best gown of shot brown silk, and her bonnet to match, with a little bouquet of dark sweet peas neatly placed on one side of it. It is true that the fashionable Mrs. Bedingfield confided to her neighbour, that dark silks and sweet peas made of velvet were not *de saison* after Longchamps. Belinda White did not care for fashion; she was far above every thing of the kind. She was thinking of her friends, and not of herself.

And now the great business of the day was about to begin; for the present little gathering was only a deliberative assembly, convened by Belinda, in order to decide upon some more substantial way of proving her gratitude to Lady Glanberris, by inviting the whole world of Whittington to bear witness to the delicate generosity that had suggested her present. A *fête* must be given. But of what nature? It must either be a breakfast or a ball; but it was very difficult to decide which would be the best.

Belinda was sorely puzzled. She asked every body in turn for their advice; but not much the nearer to a decision did she find herself at the end of her questions. Whatever the last speaker said, the next was sure to qualify or contradict; till at last all the ladies began to speak together, and Captain Blair, being the only gentleman present, merely smiled, looked from one to the other, and said nothing. This was not very enlightening; and Belinda White fairly leaned back in her chair and laughed. Her idea of pleasing every one did not seem likely to succeed. How could it do so when nobody thought of any thing but themselves? Belinda White and her wishes, means, or convenience, never came into the calculation of these dear lady friends. Each one had a separate interest. Mrs. Blakemore had three dark-complexioned daughters who looked hideous by daylight; and, though she loudly deprecated dancing as a most puerile amusement, she thought an evening party the

best. Mrs. Bedingfield remembered a pink bonnet she had bought at Boulogne (though she called it Parisian at Whittington), and thought she should look lovely in it; therefore she voted for a breakfast. Mrs. Percy Linklater, who had thick ankles and nothing but a *tarlatane* gown, recollected instantly that her silk slip was much too short for daylight, and that she had no possible means of lengthening it, for it was such a peculiar shade of lilac, and exclaimed—

“Oh, dear Miss White—a ball!—a ball!—your rooms will look *so* pretty at night, and a lamp or two in the veranda will make them *so* much wider.”

And some young ladies who were particular about their partners, fancied that smart gentlemen would not come dressed from a distance at night, so they clamoured for a morning *fête*; while others, with fewer hopes and pretensions, who knew that their professional friends could not get out till dark, joined their voices to Mrs.

Percy Linklater's, and seemed really about to carry the day. The Babel of tongues was at its height, when suddenly the sound of wheels upon the gravel of the road was distinctly heard. The quick step of horses, though coming up the hill, announced a new arrival; and the stopping of the carriage at the garden gate, instead of the hall door, showed that the new-comers claimed the privilege of old friends.

In another moment, a joyous laugh betrayed the visitors; and Belinda White, rising from her chair, hurried off to the corner of the veranda, which almost reached the end of the covered walk leading from the gate. In another moment, two young ladies in white muslin gowns and coloured ribbons, made their appearance, and Belinda White delightedly exclaiming—"Lady Alice! and Miss Stratford, too!" warmly grasped the hand of each.

"Yes, here we are, Belinda!" answered Lady Alice in a tone of delight; and, I hope, not too late for the strawberries and cream. Leonora

has half-killed her ponies driving so fast, in hopes of being in time."

"But we should have waited, dear child," said Belinda—"waited gladly; only Miss Stratford said so positively she could not come."

"It was only to prevent your waiting, my dear Belinda!" replied Miss Stratford, in a voice of the most thrilling sweetness. "I was obliged to go to Winton, because I had promised to be there for luncheon; and, though I always meant to run away with Alice, and bring her here, I was not sure that I could manage it, for there are so many people staying there."

"But I got away to you, Belinda," added Alice gaily; "and poor mama has actually got Lady Markland, and Sir John, and the three girls, all to herself. She is going to drive out all day."

"Naughty child!" exclaimed Belinda, laughing, as she marked the sparkling eyes of Alice; "however, I forgive you any thing that has brought you here. I am so glad to see you;

but come and have some luncheon, and then we can settle about the *fête*."

"Why, have you not finished all that?" asked Miss Stratford, glancing at the party at the luncheon table; "you have had plenty of councillors here."

"Yes, but perhaps your two young heads may do better than our twenty old ones, for we have not been able to decide upon any thing," answered Belinda, as she placed two chairs near her for her young favourites.

Their arrival was hailed with pleasure by all the company, who were well acquainted with their great neighbours at Winton Park, as well as with Mr. Stratford, whose place was at a very short distance from Whittington.

As soon as the merits of Belinda's strawberries and cream had been duly discussed, and the beauty and advantages of the veranda sufficiently admitted, the question—the momentous question of the breakfast or the ball, was again agitated, and the same arguments that had

been previously urged were again vociferously enforced. Poor Alice was nearly bewildered. She did not care herself which should be decided on; both were equally delightful, and it seemed to her, as she followed the course of the debate, as if she was always of the opinion of the last speaker. Miss Stratford said nothing, but listened to all attentively; and Belinda, who began to feel a nervous sort of despair, looked anxiously at Captain Blair. The captain, however, gave her no help. He was sitting bolt upright in his chair, his head more stiff than ever, and his eyes riveted on the face of Miss Stratford, as if he would have looked through her. Alice, who had caught the imploring look of Belinda White, leaned back in her chair, and laughed—a long, loud, silvery laugh, like a joyous child as she was. At last she became calm, and with the prettiest gesture of impatience possible exclaimed—

“Leonora, do speak! You, who know how to manage every thing—do settle it! Belinda,

pray, make her! She has always more ideas than any one else."

"Indeed, I wish you would, Leonora," replied Belinda; "we have been so long about it, that I begin to fear my poor little *fête* will become a vexed question, and suffered to drop altogether. What do you advise? you have such excellent taste," and the eye of Belinda brightened as she hoped for a speedy solution of her difficulties.

"I think," replied Leonora gently, "that opinions seem to be pretty equally divided. Suppose, my dear Belinda, you were to manage your *fête* so as to combine both morning and evening amusements. Ask the people about four, and let the dancing begin about eight, then every one could manage to come and go as they pleased."

"Excellent! admirable! perfect!" were the words that now resounded on every side; and Alice, enchanted at the prospect of the *fête* lasting longer than was originally intended,

was not the least clamorous for the adoption of Leonora's advice. It, indeed, did seem to be the best that had been given; and as every body appeared delighted with the proposal, the debate suddenly came to an end, and Belinda White, undismayed at the prospect of the additional trouble it would impose upon her, was so delighted to have found some way of pleasing every body, that she unhesitatingly adopted the proposition, and with the kindest smile thanked Leonora for her valuable assistance.

CHAPTER V .

THIS important matter having at length been decided, the party originally assembled at luncheon began to disperse, some to walk about the garden, while others took their leave of their kind hostess, and went away. There remained only beneath the shade of the veranda, the three ladies who had accompanied Belinda White from the village, and Captain Blair, together with Lady Alice and Miss Stratford, who did not seem in any hurry to depart.

The latter were both acquainted with Mrs. Blakemore and Mrs. Bedingfield; but Mrs. Percy Linklater and her history was, at least to Alice, a sealed book. She had always been cautioned by her mother, Lady Glanberris, not to make acquaintance with any ladies except

those she knew herself. Lady Alice was not yet out, and was very carefully guarded and advised by parents who adored her. She had wild spirits, but was as obedient and tractable as a child, and endeavoured always rigidly to act up to what she knew to be the wishes of her mother. She was quite aware that Lady Glanberris did not know Mrs. Percy Linklater, and did not wish to know her; and, therefore, it was with no little alarm that she beheld her seat herself in the next chair to her, which another lady had just left vacant. The heightened colour on the cheek of Lady Alice, as she gently and timidly declined some trifling civilities offered by the ingenious lady in the hope of making a sort of acquaintance with her, might have convinced Mrs. Percy Linklater that it was very uphill work trying to force herself upon people who did not want to know her; but Mrs. Percy Linklater had not those sensitive feelings that make a rebuff disagreeable, if not painful, and she received the civil, cold answers

of the young lady with the most stoical composure, resolving to bide her time in order to carry her own points. Lady Alice, delighted to be left in peace, kept her pretty face constantly turned to her friend Belinda White, and did not perceive that Mrs. Percy Linklater had quietly possessed herself of her pocket handkerchief, which she had carelessly dropped upon the ground near her chair. She went on talking and laughing, when, suddenly, she was arrested in some nonsense she was telling in a low voice to Belinda, by hearing Mrs. Bedingfield ask Captain Blair "If there was any news?"

"None whatever, madam. You know this is Monday; we have no London papers to-day," was the reply of the captain.

"Dear me, I forgot!" exclaimed Mrs. Bedingfield, childishly. "I hate Mondays. I can't live without my paper. I have the *Morning Post* to myself every day for two hours. I would not miss reading it for the world; I had rather go without my breakfast."

"Well, for my part," observed Mrs. Blakemore, sententiously, as she let her hard eyes rest for a moment on the face of Captain Blair, before they completed their undisguised look of contempt upon the faded *paille de riz* bonnet of Mrs. Bedingfield, "I cannot think how people can care so much about news, and what is new, when there is so much intrinsic value to be gained from what is old. I would not waste *my* time over a newspaper upon any account."

"I thought, ma'am, you were so vastly fond of reading," observed the captain, in a somewhat piqued tone.

"Reading!" echoed Mrs. Blakemore, enthusiastically. "Reading! why, of course I am. Who could ever doubt it? But do you call a newspaper 'reading?'"

"Why certainly, ma'am; and very good reading too. The leading articles of some of our papers are admirable specimens of literary composition," replied the captain, drawing

himself up within his black stock with a highly offended air.

"Yes! and some of the letters that are headed 'From our own Correspondent' are exceedingly amusing. I always read them through," said Mrs. Bedingfield, looking smilingly at the captain, with whom she generally sided when he was against the learned Mrs. Blakemore.

"Right, ma'am—quite right," was his reply, with an approving nod as far as his stock permitted; but being obliged to jerk his whole body forward in order to accomplish the graceful movement, he seemed to have been seized with a spasm. "I read them all myself, and a vast deal of information they contain—pleasant and instructive reading at once."

"Reading!" again, echoed Mrs. Blakemore gathering up the folds of her shawl, "and pleasant and instructive, too! Well, I own I *am* surprised. When I reflect upon the treasures of knowledge that lie unopened on all our

library shelves, such books, such sterling works as those of Chenevix on national character, Rollin on ancient history, Hollinshed, Locke, Rapin, or Burnet, and the stores of valuable information they contain, and compare them with the flimsy columns of a newspaper, do you think *I* can call that 'reading?'"

"Yes, but all that would not tell us anything about what is going on now," interrupted Alice, playfully; "if we had no newspapers we should know nothing about any thing—no new fashions or any thing; we should not know what new bonnets to get, should we Mrs. Bedingfield? I always read that bit out of 'the *Follet*' to papa, to try and teach him the names of all the things we wear; it is such fun making him describe the fashions, he mixes every thing together."

"I am sure Lord Glanberris has excellent taste," said Mrs. Blakemore with a pitying smile to Alice; "and a man in his high position may naturally require to know more of public

affairs than we poor studious women shut up in our own libraries. What do you say, Miss Stratford—you who are so clever? I am sure you do not spend your precious time poring over the wretched columns of a newspaper."

"Well, I must say, Mrs. Blakemore, that I am a little worldly, and a little gossiping myself. I think I do like to know what is going on as well as other people. There is always something that interests somebody, at all events."

"I like to know what happens in the world, too," interposed Mrs. Bedingfield.

"And it does not prevent one's reading grave books, just to have a little bit of pleasant news to impart to one's friends," added Leonora, who, as she concluded, bestowed a passing look of gratitude and approval upon the bronze face of Captain Blair, in return for the rapturous gaze which he had scarcely withdrawn for a moment from her own since they had sat down to luncheon. The deep blue eyes of Leonora had

a look in them that no one could withstand; and, as they met those of Captain Blair, the poor man actually started as if something had stung him; but, totally unable to make any adequate reply, he merely fidgetted a little, settled his stock, and pushing out his well-padded chest till it showed its fullest expanse of blue cloth, sunk back again in his chair.

“Well!” exclaimed Belinda White, who had followed the words if not the meaning of all who had spoken, “I don’t pretend to any learning or reading; I have no time for either books or papers, and no head for any affairs but my own; but still I do contrive to pick up my little bits of news too, sometimes,—but then my news is living news, my books living books. I mind people and not things; and the consequence is, that I know something that none of you know.”

“What is it? Do tell us! What can it be about?” was again and again repeated the

moment Belinda had finished speaking, but she only smiled as she repeated—

“It is not about a thing, it is about a person, and a person of great consequence—of great consequence to us all,” she added, as her merry eye made the tour of her guests.

“Who is it? Who can it be? Is it a man or a woman? Who can it be? do tell us, Belinda—dear Belinda,” added Alice coaxingly as soon as the storm of voices had subsided.

“Well, not to keep you longer in suspense, I will tell you at once,” answered Belinda good-naturedly. “What do you think of Sir Edward Devereux having arrived at Atherston on Friday—actually come home at last.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed the captain, startled out of all propriety by being outdone as a news-teller.

“I should have thought Sir Edward would never have returned home,” observed Mrs. Blakemore, very gravely.

“He is come, however,” replied Belinda decidedly.

“Then it was not true that he was dying?” asked Mrs. Bedingfield. “We heard that he was given over by all the physicians, and sent to Malta or Madeira, or somewhere, because they did not know what to do with him.”

“I believe, like most reports, it was partly true,” replied Belinda; “but Sir Edward did not mention either Malta or Madeira—he merely said he had been in Sicily after the bad fever he had at Florence, and then taken a long sea voyage to recruit his health. It does not seem to have done him much good, for he looks dreadfully ill.”

“You have seen him, then?” asked Mrs. Bedingfield, with a face full of curiosity. “How did you contrive that?”

“Simply by going to his house,” replied Belinda frankly. “You know, he long ago gave me leave to come the short way

through the park whenever I was on my travels ; so the other day, as I was coming home from Mrs. Milbank's, I thought I would just ask at the lodge at Atherston how Sir Edward was going on. You may imagine my surprise when I heard he was come ; so I thought I could not do less than go and see him."

"And how did you find him?" asked Leonora, in a voice of the most perfect unconcern ; "very low and doleful, I suppose," and she lifted her beautiful eyes calmly up to the face of Belinda, who simply replied—

"No, not in the least. He looks very, very ill: frightfully pulled down ; but, except that he seemed to me a little more serious than he was two years ago, I did not perceive any great difference in his manner."

"I am not surprised that Sir Edward should deeply feel the situation in which his own want of religion and duty have placed him. Having committed a murder is not a very

agreeable recollection," said Mrs. Blakemore in a sepulchral tone, and frowning until her great black eyebrows nearly met.

"Oh, not a murder!" exclaimed Alice impetuously, her face flushing, while the tears were ready to start from her eyes—"do not call it a murder! You know he might have been shot himself."

"I need not call it so; but my religion and principles forbid me to look upon such a deed in any other light," answered Mrs. Blakemore, severely.

"We women," ventured Mrs. Percy Linklater, in a soft voice, "may be forgiven if we err on the side of leniency; we are so averse to fighting."

"Or quarrelling," added Leonora with an innocent look; "what does Captain Blair say? We are no judges of a duel."

"A point of honour, ma'am—a point of honour," replied the captain with a chivalrous air.

"A very mistaken one, my dear captain," observed Belinda gently. "It seems to me that some moral degradation could easily be found to make the aggressor, in any case of quarrel, pay the penalty, instead of mutilating or killing him for an untrue or impertinent word; but men have made the law for themselves, so they do not choose to alter it. They must alter their own hearts first, and so I trust with God's help they will. In the mean time, do not let us condemn one man more than the rest, for merely acting as worldly laws had taught him. In every other respect, I am sure Sir Edward is as perfect and religious as man can be. I have known him ever since he was a child, and can safely say, a more noble heart or upright mind I never met with."

"So I *used* to think, my dear Belinda," said Mrs. Blakemore, with a sigh more venomous than the most stinging words.

"At all events there was nothing malicious or premeditated in what he did," said Alice

bravely; "at least, not as I heard the story, and I heard papa tell all the particulars several times. Poor Sir Edward, how glad he must be to come back to his own place! Atherston Castle is so beautiful! How long is he going to stay? Did he tell you, Belinda?"

"Yes," replied Belinda, looking up with an air of relief; "he said he should not go away any more, that he was tired of travelling, and should stay in his own country. He means to be very gay, and have a great many people to stay with him."

"Gay!" ejaculated Mrs. Blakemore, looking indignantly up to heaven; but no one replied to the insinuation the monosyllable was intended to convey; and Mrs. Bedingfield, in a tone of delight which made the superior woman rise from her chair as if inexpressibly shocked, and take her leave in a hurry, exclaimed—

"Sir Edward Devereux will be the greatest possible acquisition in the country. It will be quite another place now, if Atherston Castle is

to be open; and particularly while Lady Glanberris is at home. We shall have no end of gaiety," and she looked with a smile at Alice, as visions of balls and picnics and new dresses danced before her eyes. Alice kindly returned her smile, but said no more; and Mrs. Percy Linklater, as she got up to go away, carelessly observed—

"I never saw Sir Edward Devereux that I know of, but I have heard that he is a charming person, so I too am very glad that he is come;" and, shaking hands with Belinda, Mrs. Percy Linklater left the garden with a slight bow to Leonora, but without taking the slightest notice of Alice.

"What has become of Sir Edward's brother, Mr. Devereux—I used to know him so well abroad?" asked Mrs. Bedingfield, who had once, without knowing his name until afterwards, sat opposite to Mr. Devereux at a *table d'hôte* at Boulogne.

"Sir Edward expects him immediately. He

said he should make him stay altogether with him, and have his hunters at Atherston. I am glad of it; it will be some company for Sir Edward: he might feel lonely in that great house by himself," answered Belinda.

"He is not like his brother," observed Mrs. Bedingfield.

"Not in the least, but Stuart Devereux has his merits, too. He was always a favourite of mine, though I know many people do not like him," was the reply. Belinda White could never see any thing bad in any one.

"I think, Alice, if you are ready I should like to drive you home now. I promised papa to be home as early as I could," said Leonora, getting up from the table. She had not spoken one word during the discussion that had been carried on before her; but the beautiful colour in her cheek was perhaps a little heightened.

"I am quite ready," answered Alice, rising, "if Belinda will let us go. You must come to Winton, and settle the day for the *fête* finally

with mama. Will you not, Belinda?" she asked, affectionately turning to her. "Say you will come to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow, dear Alice, I have so much to do; but the next morning I will be with you early," replied Belinda.

"Good-by, then," said Alice, following Leonora, who was moving towards the garden gate; and, after sufficient leave-taking had been exchanged with those who remained behind, the two girls stepped into their pony carriage, and began their journey towards Winton. They, however, had only just gained the high-road at the bottom of the hill, and were setting off at a quicker pace, when they were stopped by the appearance of Mrs. Percy Linklater, who was walking exactly in the middle of the road. Her back was turned towards them; but, as she continued in the same central position, it was not possible to pass her on either side without the greatest rudeness. Leonora, therefore, quietly pulled up when within a few yards of her; and then,

as if she had only just perceived the approach of the carriage, she started and turned suddenly round. The ponies came to a full stop; and in another minute she had darted to the side where Alice sat, and, holding up the pocket-handkerchief she had so adroitly purloined, presented it to Lady Alice, expressing her regret at having inadvertently taken it up instead of her own. Alice, who saw nothing but what was perfectly natural in the occurrence, thanked her very gracefully for the trouble she had taken, and they were about to proceed on their drive, when Mrs. Percy Linklater, with a most well-acted frankness, exclaimed—

“I am delighted to have had this opportunity of meeting you, Lady Alice. I should have sought it before; but you know we have not long been settled at Whittington, and you were from home when we arrived. I hope, however, it has only been a pleasure deferred, and that you will present me to Lady Glan-

berris, especially as we have the honour of claiming kindred with your family."

Poor Alice was so completely taken by surprise, that she could not for a moment answer a word. The appeal was, however, so direct that it required some reply, and Alice was too simple and straightforward to take refuge in any evasive speech; so, as soon as she had recovered her astonishment, she said quietly, though blushing a good deal—

"I should be delighted to do any thing I could to please you, but I never present any one to mama; she would not allow it. I will, however, tell her what you wish."

"Thank you a thousand times," said the lady, perfectly unabashed, and smiling up at Alice in the most insinuating manner; "in your hands, I know that my cause is more than safe."

"Don't be so sure," cried Leonora gaily, and imperceptibly touching her ponies. "Alice is a shocking bad mistress of the ceremonies; I dare say she will forget all about it."

"Oh! I am not afraid," said the indefatigable woman, forced to recede a step by the impatience of the spirited little steeds; and Leonora, with a light laugh that saved Alice from further reply, nodded to Mrs. Percy Linklater, and drove on.

"How annoyed mama will be at my having made her acquaintance!" were the first words of Alice, as soon as they were out of hearing.

"So annoyed, my dear Alice," replied Leonora carelessly, "that I should not mind Mrs. Linklater's message, or say a word about it. It is not worth while."

"Indeed, Leonora, I shall certainly tell mama all she said and did. I always tell her every thing. I could not sleep if I did not," answered Alice, quickly.

"As you please," observed Leonora, with a slight gesture that made Alice not quite in such good spirits as she had been before, and she said but little all the way back to Winton Park. Leonora, on her side, did not appear

much inclined to talk. She was a most skilful driver, and seemed completely occupied in watching the beautiful action of her little brown ponies.

CHAPTER VI.

It was with a positive sensation of relief, that Leonora bade adieu to Lady Alice Percy, as she safely deposited her at the door of her father's house, Winton Park. Alice, however, had not perceived the slightest constraint in the manner of her friend ; and stood upon the broad steps before the hall door, watching with admiration the steady hand with which Leonora guided her flying ponies down the sloping road : for they actually seemed to fly, so rapid was the pace at which she drove, until the gates of the park had closed upon her.

The scenery through which she passed was perfectly beautiful ; for both nature and art had lavished all their resources to make of Winton a suitable residence for a man of the high rank

and position of Lord Glanberris. Much as Leonora prized the splendour, the comforts, and all the attributes of rank and riches, she scarcely at that moment could have told whether it was a palace or a hovel she was leaving; and she glided beneath the shadow of the magnificent oak and chestnut trees with which the park was studded, each forming a picture in itself, with the same haste and indifference she would have shown had her path lain across the uninteresting waste of a barren and desolate moor. The gates, however, once passed, her manner completely changed. She slackened her pace until the ponies quietly consented to walk, and then, leaning back in the carriage, drew a long breath, and gave herself up to the most profound meditation.

The little groom, who was her only attendant, unused to such a slow manner of travelling, which in the violent heat of the sun was not very pleasant, settled himself comfortably into the corner of his seat, and was soon fast asleep. Leonora,

however, appeared perfectly unaware of the scorching rays that were darting upon her head, and from which she had no other protection than a small white bonnet and thin blue shawl, which she had wrapped round her upon getting into the carriage. She did not feel the heat, nor would she at that moment have suffered, even if the biting frosts of winter had overtaken her in her slender attire. She barely preserved sufficient consciousness of the present to enable her to proceed upon her way; every other faculty was absorbed by the overwhelming impression of the intelligence she had just received.

He was come then; he was near her—that Sir Edward Devereux, upon whose very name she had never yet been able to think without a sensation bordering upon madness; so mixed and contradictory were all the feelings which it instantly called up. He was come then—the slayer of the man who had so loved her, the man that she too had loved, though with so different a love! She must

meet him, see him, live near him, now and always; for it so happened that their dwellings were but a very few miles apart. Once this reflection had been her secret joy; for the noble fortune of Sir Edward, as well as his ancient name, were too tangible advantages for her scheming mind to have overlooked; and her many failures in regard to the great matches she had so often had in view, had but sharpened her intellect, and impressed still more strongly upon her thoughts the necessity of not losing her time, whenever any possible opportunity of improving her position might present itself. Now, however, all had changed; and not only might the tragical event that had occurred have a powerful effect upon her plans, in so thoroughly filling the mind of Sir Edward as to leave no room for any softer thoughts; but her own mind was so completely unhinged by it, that she could not decide upon any one positive line either of feeling or action. She did not at that moment know

exactly either what she could do, or what she wished to do. Swayed to and fro by contending emotions, she scarcely knew whether she felt most hatred or gratitude towards the man whose hand had wrought such a material change in her destiny. There were moments when all that was soft and human in her nature, rose up to claim for him who was no more that meed of tender sorrow seldom refused by woman's heart to the memory of one who had loved her truly; but there were also moments when her intense love of self—her avarice and ambition—so completely overmastered her more natural feelings, that a sentiment too nearly akin to gratitude actually arose towards him who had been her deliverer from a thralldom which, however sweet its bonds, must have dangerously militated against her after success in life.

The idea, once admitted, grew to horrible distinctness. When, in the solemn hour of commune with herself, Filippo Colonna stood before her mind in all the splendour of his matchless

beauty—when the impassioned accents of his most fiery but faithful love rung once again through memory upon her ear; then she would hesitate and weep, and shudder at the feeling of desolation that his death had caused. The earth was cheerless to her now. Who now watched over her with unceasing care? No one—no, not one! He who would have given his name—his wealth—his very life for her, was gone whence none could recall him; and guilty as he had been—except upon the one point of deceiving her about his marriage, he had at least been true to her—true and faithful and loving even unto death. And must she too not feel for him, and pity him in her heart, and mourn for him with silent, bitter tears—tears that in their tenderness and truth might partly wash away her own sin?

Leonora had thought of this, had felt it also, but momentarily; even as a sunbeam glimmers through cloud and storm, and then disappears. The cold darkness of her own soul too soon

overpowered the hallowed feeling of sorrow for another's woe; and selfishness rose once again to its paramount height in her astute, calculating nature. She forgot the man who had so truly loved her: the man whom she had loved, for the vain shadow of one who might realize her hopes of grandeur and of wealth, and in her heart she trampled on that bygone love, which she might at least—sinful as it was—have commiserated, and respected for its constancy and faith.

She had, however, so long dwelt upon the idea that a splendid and immediate marriage was not only her sole chance of happiness, but the one single mode of escape from discovery and disgrace, that the more generous feelings of her heart were crushed, and she had brought herself to think of the love of Filippo Colonna with less of pity than of fear. She now looked at it but in one point of view. It might have become an obstacle in her path: its jealous, exacting nature might have worked her woe. It had

been a beauteous dream—entrancing in its depths, its tenderness, and truth; but it was dangerous. Between its pathos and its fire it might have marred the future; and the future was all in all to her. Leonora raised her head and smiled. Her hopes were not all, therefore, buried in the grave.

Thus alternately would she think and feel, until, as time wore on, the softer impression gradually faded, and her heart resumed its natural cold, designing calculations. The catastrophe which had made so great a sensation at Florence had of course immediately reached her ears; but in the new society in which she at that moment found herself at Whittington, there was no one conversant enough with the details of her former life to have the least idea that the duel—which, from the circumstance of Sir Edward Devereux, their near neighbour, having been engaged in it, was their constant subject of conversation—could be particularly interesting to her. Her emotion, therefore,

if she had displayed any upon the arrival of the news, had merely gained her the credit of very natural womanly feeling; and she certainly did not lose in the opinion of Belinda White, and all her Whittington *coterie*, by the kind anxiety she always evinced in inquiring for Sir Edward, and the probable chances of his recovery; for it had been for some time rumoured that his life could not possibly be saved, so violent was the fever with which he had been seized almost immediately upon the death of the Marchese Colonna. It was wonderful to behold the placid, gentle air of interest, with which Leonora would sit listening to the daily repeated details of the news of Sir Edward's health:

Every morning, either Captain Blair or Belinda White might, after having received the *bulletin*, have been seen walking up the winding road to "The Cliffs," which was the name of the place that Mr. Stratford had lately inherited, under the will of an old bachelor

friend, and which was just above the outskirts of the town. Leonora listened and smiled, but said little. At that time, however, her mind was made up as to the course she intended to pursue.

If Sir Edward lived, she would do her best to marry him. He had been a great admirer of hers at Florence, and she fancied he was certainly in love with her. If, however, the chances went against him and he died, her secret would die with him; for she had a strange misgiving that part of it at least was suspected, if not known by him. Her terror, lest by any want of caution the slightest rumour of it should reach England, was full as great as her desire to become Lady Devereux, and be the possessor of Atherston Castle, with a fortune that would equal, if not eclipse, that of Lady Glanberris, who was the secret object of her aversion. Either way she had brought herself to believe, that she was safe as far as Sir Edward Devereux was concerned; and she had so long indulged in this idea, that it was not

until she received the intelligence of his actual arrival, that she even admitted a doubt as to the correctness of her surmises. The sudden blow, however, which she seemed to have received upon her heart, in some degree opened her eyes; and she felt that she could no longer deceive herself with the hope of meeting with stoical composure the man who possibly held the key to her past life and future fortunes.

Her uncertainty as to the extent of his knowledge was the most perplexing part of her position. She was so clever and so confident in her own abilities, that, with but a glimmer of the right path, she would dexterously and fearlessly pursue her way; but here she was in total darkness. She could not in any way see how the difficulty was to be solved. It was true that, sooner or later, she must meet Sir Edward: they were too near neighbours not to be often included in the same society, even if they had not happened to be already intimately acquainted. Still the shortest possible

time might be fatal to her, should she not be able immediately to ascertain how far she was in his power. She could not tell in the least how he was disposed towards her; and, if he were inclined to do her an injury, it was a matter very easy of accomplishment. A word from him would ruin the somewhat exaggerated reputation for every virtue imaginable, that she had by unremitting exertions contrived to establish for herself in Whittington and its neighbourhood. Above all, she dreaded even a whisper ever reaching the ear of Lady Glanberris that might convey the slightest prejudice against her. While she courted her most distant notice, she had an innate dislike to that amiable and excellent woman, and dreaded lest she might interpose her authority to control or extinguish the great intimacy she had contrived to establish with the eldest of her daughters, Lady Alice Percy.


The young and confiding heart of Alice had instantly surrendered to the blandishments of

the beautiful Leonora ; who, being many years older than she was herself, seemed so very kind in condescending to be fond of her. At least so Alice thought, and her greatest delight was in her society. But the vigilant eye of Leonora was not easily deceived, and she soon discovered, with considerable uneasiness, that although Lady Glanberris good-naturedly indulged her daughter in the wish to associate with this new friend, yet there was a slight want of cordiality in her own manner towards the chosen companion of Alice, that did not show the unlimited confidence which it was Leonora's ambition to inspire. With the old earl she got on better ; but then he was so good-natured, he was very easily pleased.

Elated by her success, Leonora redoubled her precautions until her piety nearly assumed the hue of methodism, and her decorum that of prudishness ; but as these were faults upon the right side, they were only looked upon as a nearer approach to celestial

virtues by the exceedingly well-conducted community of Whittington, and the reputation of Leonora was duly lauded to the skies. The old ladies of the village called her "that dear sweet girl, Miss Stratford;" the clergyman declared her conduct and devotion were models of Christian humility; and Captain Blair, as he pulled up his stock and displayed his chest, said that she was not only the best, but the cleverest woman in the world; for she knew all the news intuitively that took him the whole morning to learn, and yet listened to it all over again with the most bewitching interest in her manner he had ever beheld.

So far Leonora had perfectly succeeded in establishing a firm hold over the good opinions of those persons with whom she was brought into daily contact—a measure which had seemed to her the more important from the fact of her retreat to her ancient abode at Florence being effectually cut off by the tragical event of the last season. Hardened as she was, she felt it



impossible now ever to return to that city, though it had been her birthplace; her father having married an Italian lady there, and chiefly resided in Italy.

To remain at "The Cliffs" the greatest part of the year, was therefore now the only prospect before her; and though the heart of Leonora sunk before it, and she actually loathed the society by which she found herself surrounded, she was much too adroit to throw away a chance. The neighbourhood of such houses as Winton Park and Atherston, and some others of minor importance, held out to her a certainty that the circle to which she was at that moment condemned would not always be so restricted. To reign supreme over all hearts in the country, not only a good position was essential, but a good reputation necessary. Through that much might be accomplished; and she immediately set about securing it. Perfectly aware of the advantages of a first impression, and the aid that her mar-

vellous beauty could so efficiently lend her, she resolved to establish her empire firmly from the earliest moment; and, regardless of the martyrdom which she had to undergo, she had persevered in her course, and had thoroughly succeeded, when the sudden arrival of Sir Edward Devereux caused her for a moment to tremble upon her throne.

CHAPTER VII.

MILES, like minutes, must come to an end at last; and it was with a start of surprise which had something ludicrous in it, that Leonora awakened from a sort of trance, in which she had been ever since she left Winton, and found herself close before the gate of her father's park at The Cliffs. The ponies, subdued by the tiresome foot's pace to which they had been so long condemned, pulled up of their own accord; and the jerk had the beneficial effect of restoring Leonora to consciousness, and dissipating the slumbers of little James, the groom, who had never opened his eyes since he first composed himself to sleep. Leonora could not restrain a smile as she marked the setting sun. She had been more than two hours upon the

road, though the distance was scarcely six miles. She quickened her movements a little, and in a few moments reached the house. Instead of going to Mr. Stratford's room, as was her custom, she went into the drawing-room. She had no particular reason for doing so; but was impelled by some presentiment for which she could not account. She walked up to the table. A card was lying on it. She took it up, and the name of Sir Edward Devereux met her eye. She did not start or look surprised, but put the card down quietly. She had almost expected it to be there; and, though a little cold shiver passed over her, she said in her usual tone to the servant, who had followed her into the room to draw up the blinds—

“Did my father see Sir Edward when he called?”

“No, ma'am, Mr. Stratford was just gone out when he came. Gone to the Hermitage, I believe,” added the man, seeing that Leonora waited as if for further information.

"And he left no message for him — Sir Edward, I mean?"

"None for him, ma'am; but Sir Edward desired me to say that he wished to see you about some business, and that he would try and find you at home early in the day. Perhaps to-morrow, he said, or next day, he could not fix which, on account of his brother, Mr. Devereux, whom he is expecting every moment."

"Very well. Let my father know that I shall be ready for dinner whenever he pleases," answered Leonora carelessly; and she left the room as she spoke, and went up-stairs a few steps in order to proceed to her dressing-room. She, however, suddenly turned, and, coming down again, went straight to her father's room.

Mr. Stratford, a fine intellectual-looking old man, with dark eyes and long white hair, and a very classical head, was sitting, as usual, in his deep brown leather arm-chair near the window, surrounded by books and papers. He

"Oh! nothing, of course. Belinda says that she has often talked over the matter with her, and, much as she deplores it, she does not mean to take the slightest notice of it."

A shadow passed over the face of Leonora at this remark, but she remained silent, and Mr. Stratford continued—

"Lady Glanberris is a woman of the most perfect tact and taste that I ever met with, besides being the most excellent wife and mother in the world. I should very much be guided by her advice and example; but in this case I conceive neither are wanting. A man with the fine feelings of Sir Edward must have suffered enough, without our adding our condemnation to increase the pain and discomfort of his thoughts."

"Certainly, papa," replied Leonora, with a slight tone of embarrassment in her voice; "I am sorry that I was not at home to-day when he called. It was very unfortunate."

"Sir Edward here to-day!" exclaimed Mr.

Stratford with an air of interest. "How very kind of him to come! I must drive over to Atherston to-morrow, or we can go together, my child, if you think it is not too far for your ponies."

"Not in the least, papa," replied Leonora, readily. "After a day's rest they will have recovered their long drive of to-day. But I think to-morrow rather soon; could we not put off our visit for a day or two? Suppose we fix Saturday?"

"As you please, darling," answered her father, replacing his spectacles upon his nose, and taking up the pamphlet he had been reading, "we can settle it after dinner. And now go and dress, dear child, for I am quite hungry. It is near eight o'clock."

"I will not keep you a moment, dear papa, Do order dinner; I will only just take my bonnet off, that you may not have to wait."

Leonora glided from the room as she spoke, and, true to her promise, very soon reappeared.

Any one who had possessed the clue to her thoughts, could have detected, beneath the apparent gaiety of her manner, an expression of intense anxiety ; but to an uninterested observer she would only have appeared the amiable affectionate daughter, of the most amiable and affectionate of men. All that evening, in particular, she was more enchanting than ever, and appeared in the highest spirits, sung his favourite songs, and saw her indulgent and happy parent leave the drawing-room with the firm conviction that he ought to be the proudest and most thankful of fathers, for never was man blessed with so excellent and lovely a daughter. Poor Mr. Stratford ! He was one of those rare persons who scarcely believe in the existence of evil, so totally free from all guile is their own simple and unsuspecting nature. He seemed to think that every thing would go right of itself, and that coercion to a generous nature was more galling than effective. But he made the great mistake of judging

every body by his own heart, and accepted as generosity that which was only dissimulation. To this might be attributed many of the faults of character which unhappily existed in Leonora.

Her principles and ideas of right and wrong had pretty nearly been left to themselves. Her mother, an Italian lady of rare beauty and accomplishments, had died when she was an infant; and, as she had inherited the beauty and talents of his lost Antonia, so did Mr. Stratford apparently take for granted that the many virtues of which he knew his wife to have been possessed, must necessarily have descended to her child. He never therefore studied or understood her nature; and the young Leonora—being left almost solely to the guidance of Italian servants and governesses, of whose real character and morals he was equally ignorant, deprived also of the invaluable blessing of a mother's care—soon became as artful and insincere as those by whom she was habitually surrounded. As she grew up these vices strengthened, and

amply developed themselves as a wider range of feelings suggested the importance of their use. Over-indulged, and permitted to lead a life of independence totally unfit for any girl, the formation of promiscuous friendships was the first evil consequence that followed.

Unfortunately for Leonora, one of the worst specimens of "dear lady friends" immediately attached herself to her. The fascinating Countess Vincenza, a young married woman, whose girlhood had been passed in a series of adventures, and who had just succeeded in making a brilliant marriage, was the chosen Mentor to whose counsels Leonora greedily listened. The creed of the unscrupulous countess being that "money and position were the only requisites for happiness and power," the same belief was speedily engrafted upon the mind of her too apt pupil, and the means to such an end were duly discussed between them. When, therefore, but just emerging from childhood, Leonora looked forward with intense anxiety to the gra-

tification of her ambitious aspirations, and, supported and urged on by the baneful advice of her unscrupulous friend, began cautiously to lay her plans, so as to ensure success.

Her first care was to acquire complete power over the mind as well as affections of her father. This, with a nature like that of Mr. Stratford, was not an Herculean task. His heart followed where his "fancy led," and he very soon arrived at that state of child-worship that his beautiful daughter desired. His opinions were no longer his own. This secured to her, her liberty for life. He not only saw with her eyes, but actually heard with her ears; for it was utterly useless to try and persuade him of any thing, if Leonora said to the contrary. As to interposing his paternal authority upon any occasion whatever, the possibility never occurred to him. He would have deemed himself wanting in affection towards the idol of his heart. To be beloved by her was all he asked. Leonora, therefore,

lived exactly as she pleased, enjoyed the most unbounded liberty, and was permitted the free use of every luxury and indulgence that the moderate income of her father could command.

This speedily generated habits of extravagance, and a boundless desire for more than she possessed, that soon settled into a feverish, avaricious passion. She would have grasped the wealth of the universe to minister to her selfish and insatiate desires. Pomp and splendour, inseparable from the idea of riches, became fixed objects to be attained at any price. She had no fortune of her own, and the fact of that of her father being derived from an annuity, held out no prospect of an encouraging nature; she had therefore little chance of realizing the golden dreams of her youth, except by making a great match. This it was her firm determination to accomplish; for to live even in moderate affluence was martyrdom to her. But it is easier to intend than to perform.

What is called "making a great match," is of

necessity not an event of everyday occurrence ; and in the position of Leonora it seemed more doubtful and difficult than she had at first imagined. Mr. Stratford had long been domiciled at Florence, and his means would not admit of a frequent change of abode. The English society in that city was extremely fluctuating; and among the native residents, there were few who could have realized even half the ideas of grandeur that the ambitious mind of Leonora nourished. Even the rare beauty with which she had been gifted, failed to obtain for her a rich marriage of *convenance*.

In more cases than one she had been disappointed, and little by little Leonora began to see her once confident hopes melting away. She was four-and-twenty, and not one aspirant equal to her pretensions had as yet presented himself. She began to tremble for the future, and moments of intense anxiety now too often clouded her hitherto joyous hours. Her mind was in this state of restlessness and deferred hope, when

the Marchese Colonna came to reside at Florence. He was a Roman of noble birth and immense wealth, who had married early in life a lady of even higher rank than his own, and of a temper fully as ungovernable. An almost immediate separation was the consequence of this ill-assorted union, and, as the event made but very little sensation, it was soon forgotten. The Marchesa departed upon her travels, and her husband, disgusted by the unhappiness of his home, quitted his native city, and, after various wanderings, took up his abode at Florence. No one thought of inquiring what his former life had been, and therefore his marriage remained for some time a secret. His popularity was too immediately established to make it desirable that any fault should be discovered in this new idol of society; for he instantly bought a splendid palace, and astonished as well as delighted the world by the magnificence and hospitality of his way of living.

This was the turning-point in the destiny of Leonora. No sooner had the Marchese

Colonna beheld her, than one of those mad passions, common to ill-regulated minds, took possession of him. Day by day it grew and strengthened; and Leonora, apart from the gratification of her ambition, soon very sincerely returned the affection she had inspired. The many graces and attractions of the Marchese might have pleased even the most fastidious taste, and for a moment perfect happiness seemed to her within her grasp. It was, however, but for a moment; for before long the fatal truth was perforce revealed. The Marchese, finding that his proposals were about to be laid before her father, was compelled to disclose the secret of his marriage.

In the first anguish of despair, the conduct of Leonora had been worthy of all praise. She had at once broken off all acquaintance with her treacherous lover, and hidden herself from his sight. In solitude and silence she bowed beneath her grief; but, to ensure the triumph of virtue, it required a more firm determination to

continue in the right path than she possessed; for her instantly choosing it had been a decision dictated rather by impulse than principle. Little by little, she began to relax in her severity towards herself. The heavy load of her own sorrow became too great for her wavering mind to bear, and her ambition, coupled with the passionate entreaties of the Marchese, (from which, notwithstanding efforts that were at first sincere, she could not wholly escape,) urged her on to thoughts she never ought to have admitted. She began to calculate chances, imagine possibilities, and look forward to the realization of hopes she at first would not have dared to entertain; till at last she brought herself calmly to listen to a seemingly plausible scheme devised by the Marchese in order to have his marriage annulled. It was long before she could reconcile her conscience to so dangerous a course; but, unsupported by higher motives, her besetting sins stole in, and palliated to her view that on

which she still dared not look without a shudder. The idea of engaging herself to one already married, seemed to her a crime too hideous to contemplate; but the thought, once permitted to take root in her mind, soon grew and strengthened. The worldly advantages of such a marriage, added to the affection which the Marchese had inspired, finally overcame her scruples, and at last the fatal compact was made.

It was then that Leonora had first exhibited that excessive caution which had so infuriated her lover; who, in his frantic passion, would not have hesitated to proclaim to the whole world that she was his affianced bride. No act of insane folly seemed to him extravagant enough to commit for her sake; and for a moment the terrified Leonora beheld the whole fabric of her visions in danger of instant annihilation. She immediately therefore applied herself, not only to avert the evil consequences she dreaded, but to turn to her own advantage the position of affairs; for, although she now

did not shrink from receiving the addresses of a man who had no longer the right to speak of love to her, she yet shrunk from the censure of the world. The world, that was her idol and her hope, must be conciliated or blinded. The former was the easiest, but the latter was the course that she preferred; and from the day of her engagement began a life of duplicity, which would have demoralized a better mind than hers.

A series of tricks, concealments, and falsehoods, cannot be persisted in without its pernicious effects becoming visible, and the nature of Leonora soon began to deteriorate. As time passed on, difficulties seemed to increase, and fresh artifices had to be devised. The dissolution of the marriage of the Marchese, which at first had appeared so easy of accomplishment, now seemed to be a matter almost of utter impossibility; but, as precedents were not absolutely wanting, the artful Leonora so contrived to impress upon her frantic lover the necessity of the most severe caution in

order to ensure success, that his impetuous nature for once gave itself up to her control.

The most rigid propriety of manners in public was observed between them, and thus the scandal of the world was avoided. Leonora played her part to perfection. To her astute and scheming nature, it neither was difficult nor irksome; while any act of romantic folly, or heroic self-sacrifice, now seemed an impossibility to her. Her eye was constantly fixed upon the future; but, alas! only upon a worldly future. In vain the Marchese, fiery, impassioned and devoted, fretted and chafed, and suffered, under the iron yoke of her calculating coldness. She steadily went upon her way; and, the better to deceive the world she so fondly worshipped, she feigned to occupy herself in public with one of the most attractive of her adorers; thus adding fuel to the fire which was consuming the heart that really and fervently adored her.

In the mean time, every effort that could

be devised was put in practice, in order to procure the annulment of the ill-fated marriage of the Marchese. Fortune, however, continued unpropitious to his wishes. Notwithstanding the veil of secrecy thrown around his movements, they could not be thoroughly concealed from the person most interested in them.

The Marchesa Colonna, a young and beautiful woman, who had not the least wish to be divorced, as she fully intended resuming her position at a future time, when she conceived her proud husband should have been sufficiently humbled, was very soon informed of certain proceedings that were taking place in high quarters, in order to propitiate ruling powers. Pecuniary means were at her command equally with that of the Marchese, and intelligence was easily obtained. Her family was even more powerful than his, and it seemed as if the struggle could only end in the ruin of both. Wherever the Marchese contrived to place a bribe, his wife neutralized its effect by the

application of one considerably higher, till at last he began to despair of success. His whole life might pass in making these futile attempts, and his liberty yet be unattained. The prospect was dispiriting; but, day after day, it impressed itself more vividly on his mind, and he saw before him an almost certainty of failure.

In an evil hour for his own repose, he partly made this confession to Leonora. From that hour her love for him, if love it could be called, visibly began to decline. The life of secrecy and constraint she had so long been forced to lead, became inexpressibly irksome to her. She was impatient to assume the pomp and station which was the object of her ambition, and the slow march of events did not at all keep pace with the magnificent expectations she had at first entertained. It was clear, that if ever the Marchese Colonna recovered his freedom, it must be a work of time; and time was precisely the enemy she most dreaded. All others might be outwitted or subdued; but

time, that inexorable, steadily advancing foe, could not be eluded even by her arts. In a few—perhaps a very few—years, all her efforts must be vain; and then what would remain to her for the sacrifice she had made? Every feeling turned to bitterness and wrath as she dwelt upon this reflection, and meditated on the means of escape from the evil she had brought upon her head. All softness seemed to vanish at once. No thought of repentance, no pang of remorse, no sentiment of sorrow for the blow she was about to inflict, for a moment influenced her cold and callous heart; but, urged on by the one grasping desire of her mind, she calmly decided that her present tie should by no means prevent her from using every effort to effect the grand design of her life—that of making an advantageous match. To do so without the knowledge of the Marchese was utterly impossible, and to obtain his sanction seemed equally hopeless.

Even the spirit of Leonora quailed before

the burst of agony with which her first hint upon the subject was received by her infatuated but devoted lover. With all the frantic impetuosity of his nature, he swore to her not to survive her desertion of him one single hour; and, with all the heart-rending tenderness and submission of a true and fervent passion, he implored of her not to trifle with a love like his, or betray the heart that trusted and loved her even more than life. The cold-blooded calculating syren listened, and promised, and gloried in her power; but not one spark of real genuine affection, that might have seemed to redeem in some measure the sin she had committed, ever shone from that now vicious and hardened heart. She only felt that she must be more cautious in future; but her determination was not the less fixed. It seemed, too, as if Fate for the first time was about to be propitious; for more than one opportunity of making a great marriage ere long presented itself, and she once again began to revel in the excitement of aspiring hopes.

From some cause, however, these hopes had not been realized: and one after another a succession of half-declared admirers glided from her toils, and disappeared. It was at this moment that Sir Edward Devereux arrived at Florence, and almost simultaneously her father received the very unexpected news of the legacy of his old friend, Mr. Winslow, who had bequeathed to him his very pretty bachelor's residence of "The Cliffs," near Whittington. The coincidence struck Leonora as something extraordinary, and her active brain was not long in devising a scheme whereby the proximity of her new home to that of Sir Edward might be turned to account.

Her first care must be so far to ingratiate herself with her new acquaintance, as to make him equally desirous with herself that their meeting at Florence should not be the last. It was not a difficult matter to Leonora to attract and subdue. So beautiful, so winning, so adorable a being (at least apparently) seldom crosses the

path of man, and few there were who could refrain from offering the homage of their unqualified admiration to one so rarely gifted, and whose truth and purity they had no reason to doubt. Sir Edward Devereux, although far superior in mind to most of the gay flutterers of the world, was not more proof against the artful blandishments of Leonora than many others had been before him. He had not been long at Florence ere the practised eye of the accomplished actress detected the impression she had made.

The prize was well worth the bold game that must be played to secure it; but to carry out such a scheme at Florence, beneath the vigilance of the enamoured and devoted Marchese, was impossible. Already his trembling heart had taken alarm; but Leonora, accustomed to his jealous ravings, and firm in the secret decision to which she had come, turned away his suspicion by a smile, and, renewing her protestations of love for him, declared her utter indifference to Sir Edward,

and the impossibility of a man of his reserved habits and manner ever making the slightest impression upon her heart. Never had the unfortunate Marchese beheld the object of his adoration so touchingly affectionate and confiding as when she made this declaration to him; and, as if to confirm her words, she instantly imparted a secret which, if painful to him in one sense, certainly relieved him of the impression that the society of Sir Edward Devereux was in any way necessary to her happiness. She was going away: going of her own accord to leave Florence, and accompany her father to England. Her absence would be short, but it was voluntary; and this idea certainly went far to reconcile the Marchese to the loss of her society for a few weeks.

Such was the term fixed by Leonora for her visit to The Cliffs; a visit to which, Mr. Stratford, happy as a child in his new-born consequence of ownership, was not the only person looking forward with intense

delight. Leonora had fully matured her plans. She was far too good a general to march without being certain that her forces would follow her. She knew as well as possible the very day that would see Sir Edward Devereux restored to his castle at Atherston. Fain would she also have divined the precise moment when she, as its mistress, should make her entry by his side! But it was too early in the progress of affairs to arrive positively at such a happy conclusion. The foundation of her great plot had been laid; the first act of the drama had been most successfully played, and to change the scene of action was the next step.

Sir Edward, although he had come to no decision with himself, was dazzled by her beauty, and fascinated by her grace. He had never seen her before, and was quite ignorant upon all points connected with her education and mode of life. He fully intended returning immediately to England; and, once there, he would have ample opportunity of

studying the character and disposition of the woman who, he candidly acknowledged, had pleased and interested him more than any one he had ever yet seen. And so Leonora departed, with hope in her heart and a promise on her lips.

The unhappy Marchese saw her torn from him, with the maddening feeling that her sorrow was not equal to his own. As he stood upon the spot where she had parted from him, he felt as though his heart had been torn from his breast. The anguish of his thoughts was too great. In obedience to her wishes, he had relinquished his first idea of visiting England while she was there. The old plan of "prudence" had been again urged and admitted; but he secretly resolved, that if she did not return immediately, as she had said, he would at once seek her out and die at her feet, should he even have a doubt of her truth. The fierce violence of his passions was totally unchecked by any sense of religion. To follow his own inclination without let or hindrance—

onwards, ever onwards, like the sweep of a rolling river—had always been his life; he could not stop or even pause upon his course. His sinful and insane love for Leonora had the one redeeming quality of perfect sincerity. He would have been true to her to his life's end. His jealousy and exacting conduct were, therefore, not unnatural; and, not being founded on the littlenesses and egregious self-love which destroy instead of creating sympathy, might have claimed at least pity and forbearance from the heartless object of such deep devotion.

The absence of Leonora—her first absence—left a blank in his existence, which it was impossible to fill up; and sadness and irritation, by turns, took possession of his mind. These feelings were not diminished by some casual remarks which he happened to overhear, connecting the departure of Leonora with the evident attentions of Sir Edward Devereux; which, of course, the gossiping part of society had not failed to register. At the least mention of her name,

coupled with that of another, the brain of the unhappy man seemed on fire. From having been the dearest friend of the unconscious Sir Edward, he had gradually learned to detest him, and secretly watched his opportunity for revenge. It was not long before it came. A very slight subject may easily be magnified into a cause of dispute, if people are so inclined.


Torn by his own thoughts, the Marchese Colonna lost all command over himself; a stinging insult, publicly offered to Sir Edward, was as haughtily retorted by him, and, of course, a challenge, instantly accepted, was the consequence. Sir Edward, though the more reflecting man of the two, had not yet learned to sacrifice "the opinion of the world" to the judgment of a higher power; and it was not till the young, the noble, and the beautiful Filippo Colonna lay dying at his feet—dying the victim of his lawless passions, and unrepenting of his sins—that he, by whose hand he had fallen, *felt* the wrong he had done.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morning after Sir Edward Devereux had called at The Cliffs, Leonora made it her special duty to provide full employment for Mr. Stratford, in order that he might, by no possibility, be in the way, or disturb the longed-for yet dreaded interview which she was sure would take place that day. She felt as certain of seeing Sir Edward arrive, as if he had formally appointed the meeting, instead of the vague message he had left for her, saying, "He would call some day soon." It was, therefore, with infinite satisfaction that, immediately after breakfast, she went to the hall-door to see her father comfortably mounted on his ambling iron-grey pony, knowing that his pockets were filled with more cards and notes from her than he could possibly leave at their destinations.

His first visit being intended for Belinda White, made it certain that he would not get under way again for a considerable time.

As soon as he had fairly passed the gate of the park, Leonora returned to the drawing-room, and sat down in the bow window that commanded a view of the road. No one could possibly arrive without her seeing them. Somewhat excited by the agitation of her thoughts, Leonora looked even more beautiful than usual that day. She was dressed in a close-fitting gown of pale grey silk, that showed the beauty of her tall slightly rounded figure, and wore a large collar and loose sleeves of the finest lace. She could not have chosen a more simple and becoming dress. There was something foreign and statue-like about her, that made her unlike other people. Her hair was a glossy black, wound round her head in braids, her forehead wide rather than high, her nose nearly straight, and her chin and lips cut and moulded as are seldom seen except in marble. But it was her




eyes that gave so peculiar an expression to her face; they were dark blue, very long and fringed on both lids with black eyelashes, and had a tender affectionate expression, proving that the face cannot always be regarded as an index of the mind. When she smiled, she was still more beautiful than before; her teeth were as regular as rows of pearls, and Leonora often smiled, for she was more a gay than a pensive beauty.

Her appearance certainly betokened her half Italian origin; but she had an English complexion of the finest kind, and a skin of the most delicate texture. It was not astonishing that her rare style of beauty excited such universal admiration and not a little jealousy; for by her side, most other women, even many who had a great reputation for being handsome, looked coarse and frightful. She was perfectly aware of her beauty—all women are so; only most of them overrate their own pretensions, and undervalue those of their neighbours. Leonora, however, was not likely to make herself ridicu-

lous by any such mistake. She knew that she was beautiful; but she was less vain of it than proud. She had been taught by her Italian friends to consider it a great means to a great end; and that, gifted as she was, her destiny was not like that of ordinary mortals.

It is certain that very highly organized minds often accept, if they do not seek out, very peculiar positions—positions of difficulty, of danger, or of self-sacrifice—as though from an innate feeling that the powers of which they are conscious will bear them through. Leonora possessed something of this feeling, which might once have been turned to better account, had higher principles been instilled into her young mind, and a more judicious course of education bestowed upon her; but now, instead of exerting it for any noble or generous purpose, she used it but for one end. All the energy of her mind was devoted to carrying out the mean views of self-aggrandizement which her intriguing spirit constantly



generated. She was always acting a part, and weaving an intricate web of difficulties, which she expected would one day unfold to her advantage. She well knew that other girls, many even of her own acquaintance, had succeeded in the same sort of character she was playing; and why should she be less fortunate than they had been? This had long been her constant reflection, and was not calculated to turn her from her course.

As she sat alone in her room, Leonora felt an unaccountable presentiment that this day was to be a very eventful one to her. She could not define the meaning of the sensation; but, for some time, the very name of Sir Edward Devereux had seemed like a spell over her. She felt as if, for some unknown reason, her fate was indissolubly connected with his. That it might be so in the manner she proposed to herself, had long been her most fervent prayer; for, added to the all-powerful temptations of his wealth and position, there was a charm in the gentle and self-pos-

sessed manner of Sir Edward to which she was not insensible. He was also extremely good-looking, though without that extraordinary regularity of feature by which Filippo Colonna had been so distinguished.

In spite of her efforts, Leonora never could help contrasting the two men. It seemed as if she never thought of the one without the image of the other rising before her. This, however, after the tragical event that had occurred, she looked upon as too natural a coincidence to occasion her either a moment's reflection or a moment's remorse. She would not avow even to herself the real meaning of her thoughts. Perhaps, if she had done so, she might have been sufficiently shocked by their enormity, to have hesitated in the revolting course of vicious ambition she was pursuing. She had deceived one man by her arts into the belief of her affection, and she intended to act the same part by the other. It never occurred to her for a moment that Sir Edward could, by any

possibility, be in possession of her secret, although her mind misgave her as to the share which she must indirectly have had in placing him in the melancholy position in which he then stood.

It was, therefore, with feelings of anxiety rather than fear, that she now awaited his coming; imagining that, by his manner that day, she would be enabled to judge of the strength of the impression which she doubted not her charms had produced upon him. The *empresement* of his paying his visit to her and her father so immediately upon his arrival at home, augured well for her designs. Surely the day could not be very distant, when, as Lady Devereux, she would take her place among the noblest and richest in the land! What a vista of happiness and splendour opened to her view as she dwelt upon the thought! How different would be her position as mistress of Atherston Castle, from the unpretending comforts which she now enjoyed! She looked round the room in which she sat. It was a pretty small room,

papered with pale green paper, and furnished with white chintz sprigged with roses; there were comfortable arm-chairs and sofas, and the carpet looked like soft green moss. It had been newly furnished just before the death of its late owner; and Mr. Stratford was too fond of every thing that had belonged to so generous a friend to have, as yet, listened to the counsels of his daughter; although he felt that the day was not far off, when more costly articles of furniture would replace all or many of his beloved relics.

Leonora looked round the room with disgust. Was that a fit habitation for her? Was that the all of earthly splendour she was destined to enjoy? Any country clergyman's wife might possess as much. With a glance of disdain she scanned the moderate dimensions of her really pretty room; and then, not thinking it worth while to continue the survey, she turned her eyes to the window, from whence was visible a very well-kept and beautiful pleasure ground, with turf like velvet, enlivened

with innumerable beds of flowers. The freshness without seemed as though it should have been calming to her perturbed spirit; but she was thinking very little of the beauties of nature at that moment; she was watching attentively the first turn of the road, at which she knew any one coming towards the house must be visible. The hours were advancing, and no one had as yet appeared; but, at last, she was rewarded for her patience by seeing the very person she expected rapidly approaching. She had imagined that Sir Edward Devereux would have come on horseback, that being his usual mode of travelling; but, instead of riding, he drove a phaeton with a beautiful pair of small bay horses, whose light steps seemed scarcely to touch the ground.

Leonora had only just time to give orders that no one should be admitted during his visit, before he was at the door. In a few moments he entered the room. With all her efforts to receive him as if nothing had happened, she

felt her knees tremble and her hands grow icy-cold as she rose from her seat and advanced a few steps towards the centre of the room.

Sir Edward met her with far less embarrassment in his manner, but his cheek was deadly pale. He took her hand, and for one moment his eyes rested sadly upon her; and then, after a few words of commonplace inquiry as to her health and that of Mr. Stratford, he followed her to the large sofa near the window, and sat down by her side. By this time she had recovered her *aplomb*, and pretty nearly resuming her usual manner, she said, gaily—

“I cannot say, Sir Edward, how much vexed I was to have missed you yesterday. It was such an agreeable surprise when the servant gave me your card. I had not the least idea that you were in the country.”

“Then you had not seen Belinda White,” replied Sir Edward, trying to follow her tone of gaiety, “for I find she has been circulating the news of my arrival all over the town.”

"Yes! but we are out of the town here; quite country people, we flatter ourselves," replied Leonora.

"Poor Belinda!" continued Sir Edward; "she found me out directly. She was my first visiter; and my first pleasure was the sight of her dear honest face once more: it did me good only to look at her."

"She is a very old friend of yours, is she not?" inquired Leonora.

"Very! Indeed the earliest pleasure I can remember, was sitting upon her knee when I was a child, and picking sugar-plums out of the pocket of her apron: little round white comfits—I can see them now. My poor mother was so fond of her, she used almost to live at Atherston with us."

A shade of great softness passed over the fine face of Sir Edward as he seemed to recollect the happiness of old times, and Leonora sympathizingly remarked—

"She is indeed a most valuable friend,

and I do not wonder at your affection for her."

"I hope you like her, too; every one likes Belinda White. She is a sort of privileged person, and a capital authority for all the news of the neighbourhood. I wonder she did not tell you she had seen me!" and Sir Edward, (who, having driven round by the Hermitage, had not only met Mr. Stratford on the way, but been duly informed by Belinda that she *had* announced his arrival to Miss Stratford,) fixed his eyes keenly on the face of Leonora, to read if possible her reason for this spontaneous falsehood; but Leonora who, in reality, had no particular reason for uttering it, except her usual habit of concealing or altering the truth, only evasively replied—

"Oh! I was at Winton yesterday. Have you been there yet?"

"No," replied Sir Edward; "I have had no time yet. I only came home two days ago; I will try and drive there to-morrow."

"You have no idea how beautiful Lady Alice Percy is grown. I had not seen her for three years: not since the winter Lady Glanberris spent at Florence. I should not have known her again. She is taller than I am now."

"Then she must be too tall; at least I should think so," said Sir Edward with a smile which might have been complimentary, if it had not been ironical. Leonora, however, did not see it: she was looking down, that he might admire the beauty of her wondrous eyelashes, and he added—

"She was, however, a lovely child when I last saw her. I am not surprised at her growing up handsome; her mother was the most striking person I ever saw, ten years ago, and so good and kind."

"Oh, excellent! most excellent!" exclaimed Leonora rapturously, and raising her eyes with animation. "I have always thought Lady Glanberris the most charming person in the

world; and she has such a manner—such an endearing manner—a sort of motherly kindness mingled with dignity, never too much or too little of either: don't you think so, Sir Edward?" she added artlessly.

"I do, indeed. I have never thought otherwise. They must be invaluable neighbours to you, Miss Stratford; do you see much of them?"

"A great deal. Alice and I are constant companions; I do not know what I should do without her," was the reply.

"And she would still less know how to do without you, Miss Stratford, having once known you," said Sir Edward with something like a sigh; "you young ladies are apt to make such dear friendships, it must be a heart-breaking matter when any of you marry."

"Do you think so?" said Leonora laughing.

"Yes, indeed I do; at least to those who remain behind. I pity the bereaved young ladies who take their last farewell of their

chosen friend in the capacity of bridesmaid to her."

"But people need not give up all their friends because they are married?" asked Leonora, in a tone of innocent surprise.

"I should expect my wife to do so, at all events, supposing that I had one," answered Sir Edward with a smile.

"Should you be very jealous? I think not. I think you have too much sense," observed his companion with an air of candour.

"Jealous! no; but exacting—watchful; yes. I should want—I must have—all the confidence of the woman I love. I have always thought confidence the most precious part of love."

"That is exactly my opinion!" exclaimed Leonora joyously; "just what I have always felt; but you are the first man that I ever heard say so. I do not think in general men understand what confidence is."

"Perhaps, because you never tried to make them understand it; you never probably con-

fided your secret thoughts to any one," said Sir Edward, bending his fine dark eyes upon the face of his hearer with a very searching expression. Leonora did not like the look; but she parried it as well as she could by an air of childish gaiety, as she laughingly replied—

"I—oh, never! Who would care for my confidence—poor me! I may keep it all to myself. It would be of little value to any one else."

"I do not think so at all, Miss Stratford. I think the *real* confidence of a woman so superior as you are to others, would be an object of the greatest value."

The slight stress which, in spite of himself, he laid upon the word "*real*," made the heart of Leonora beat quicker. What could he mean by it? She did not venture to look up, but seemed very intent upon examining the pattern on the edge of her laced sleeve, and Sir Edward went on—

"And I am not the only person of that opinion. I have known others who would

have given a great deal for the confidence of which you speak so lightly. You see I know more about your admirers than you think, Miss Stratford—more perhaps than you do yourself.” The jesting tone in which he said these last words dispelled the fear which had begun to creep into the mind of Leonora from his previous remark, and she answered in the most lively tone she could assume—

“Oh! I dare say you do—much more than I know, or care either; for I cannot say that I really care much for the admiration of the world,” and she looked up in his face with the most gentle, winning smile, as if she was confessing her most secret thoughts to him.

Sir Edward looked wonderingly into those clear beautiful eyes, so fearlessly upturned to his, as if to ascertain how it was possible that so much guile could wear so fair a mask; and for a moment the thought struck him that he might have been deceived; that the whole tale he had heard might only have been the offspring of

virulent jealousy or an insane despair. The feeling of joy with which he welcomed this thought, showed him how dangerously dear to him the exculpation of Leonora from the terrible stigma cast upon her might become.

It was only, however, for one moment; he remembered the falsehood about Belinda White that had only just passed her lips—a falsehood not wrung from her by the overwhelming sense of shame, by the terror of condemnatory appearances, but actually volunteered—launched off as if it were a matter of course that the truth must be qualified or concealed: and the impression of her duplicity returned. A demoralized mind beneath a form so heavenly! what a horrible contrast! A cold feeling of disgust began to creep over him, and he hastened to approach the business which was the real object of his visit; but still with the reserve which, after much deep meditation, he had resolved should guide his course with respect to the knowledge he possessed of her history.

After the silence of a few moments, which had given him ample time for his thoughts, he continued the conversation as if in answer to her last remark—

“The admiration of the world, and the admiration of an individual, are very different things, but one is often the consequence of the other. I have much too high an opinion of your judgment, Miss Stratford, to suppose you would confound the two. Universal homage, however, is pleasing, and such you must ever command, much as you despise it.”

“You are too amiable and flattering, Sir Edward, and rate my poor little merits much too highly,” replied the young lady, with a most graceful smile.

“Not at all!” said Sir Edward simply. “For my part I always thought this homage so undoubtedly your right, that I was the less surprised at being selected for a confidant on the subject of a passion you had inspired.”

"You!" exclaimed Leonora with an uneasiness she could not entirely conceal—"a confidant!' I do not understand, Sir Edward: what can you possibly mean? I know of no such *grande passion*;" she added, with a little nervous laugh, far less silvery than usual. The face of Sir Edward had grown sad as well as grave, and, with a trembling heart, she watched it as she waited for his next words.

"Perhaps not," he said, slightly laying an emphasis unintentionally upon the first word; "and, alas! it is one of which you can never hear again, for he that felt it is no longer on the earth. Miss Stratford, strange as it may appear that I should be the bearer, yet it is the fact. Do not be alarmed—do not hate me for it; but I bring you, as it were, a message from the tomb." A momentary pause followed these words, and then he added—

"The Marchese Colonna sent for me an hour before he died."

At this unexpected communication, Leonora

felt as if turned to stone. She neither looked up nor spoke, but gradually allowed herself to sink gently back, until her shoulders touched the cushion of the sofa. She could not support her own weight. Her whole fate, she knew, was hanging upon the next words that he who sat by her side must utter.


Sir Edward, with his heart bursting with the recollection of the deathbed scene he had witnessed, fixed his eyes upon her face and went on, though his voice began to falter:—"He sent for me, not only to forgive me, but to speak to me of you." He paused, for the fierce agony of that beautiful face rose to his memory, as the dying man had poured forth his sorrow and his love, and he contrasted it with the lovely profile now before him, which gave no sign of emotion, save in its fixed rigidity. A bitter thought lent him strength to proceed, and, controlling his feelings, he went on—

"He spoke to me, Miss Stratford, as only one man speaks to another at the solemn part-

ing for ever; he spoke to me of you, and confided to me the burning love that had long possessed his heart. He bade me tell you it was unchanged; that his last thought was of you, and for you, and he blessed you with his dying breath."

The tears which were now falling down the face of the speaker, for a few moments prevented his utterance; but, making an effort to overcome his emotion, he continued—"He gave me a letter for you, and a package, and charged me to deliver them myself. Here is the letter: the parcel is in my carriage. 'That you would never forget him,' was all that he asked in return. These were his last words."

As Sir Edward in almost an inaudible tone finished speaking, he laid the letter of the Marchese upon a little table close to Leonora. She took it up, looked at it, but did not open it. That well-known handwriting, though tremulous and broken, she would have recognised it among a thousand!



How could she look on it unmoved? A frightful pang had shot through her heart; but the diabolical love of self mastered her pity and reverence for the dead. Why should she commit herself? The man who was gone could do her no good; the man who was by her side could make or mar her life. She must nerve herself with steel if she still hoped to succeed. In all that Sir Edward had said, there was not a syllable that condemned her. Was this all that he knew, or from delicacy might he not have suppressed a part? It was a horrible uncertainty; but she must accept the chance. No false sentiment or heroism must induce her to betray her secret.

Rapidly these thoughts chased each other through her brain—that brain so clear and undisturbed when serving the idol of self.

Sir Edward, overwhelmed by the workings of his own heart, forgot for a moment to watch the effect that his words had produced; but he actually started when the voice of Leonora,

soft and musical as usual, fell upon his ear. It sounded to him harsh as the grating of a saw upon iron, and his blood grew cold in his veins as he found himself listening to her words.

"It must, indeed," she said, "have been a most trying scene, and I feel all you must have undergone."

"Dreadful!" murmured her hearer with a shudder.

Leonora continued—"I cannot imagine any thing more distressing to a man; but you know you were not to blame: the duel was forced upon you. So, why torment yourself? I assure you, Sir Edward, you look excessively ill—quite alarmingly so. All your friends are most anxious about you. How glad I am we were not at Florence! Poor papa was such an intimate friend of the Marchese, that I am sure he would have suffered terribly. I was exceedingly sorry and shocked when I heard of it. It must have been a most distressing scene!'

"It was one that I can never for a moment forget," replied Sir Edward solemnly, and rising hastily as he spoke. Leonora rose also, and a sentiment of loathing, of which he could not have thought himself capable, suddenly filled his heart, as the folds of her silk gown touched him. He felt as if a serpent had crawled over him.

"Allow me," he said in a tone, the coldness and formality of which struck terror into the heart of Leonora, who, in spite of her agitation, did not fail to perceive it, "to fulfil my mission to the end; my illness has alone prevented me from doing so much sooner."

As he spoke, he rapidly moved towards the door, and, before Leonora could be aware of his purpose, he had left the room. That one moment of rest seemed to relax the frightful tension that was actually maddening her brain. She pressed her hands upon her head, and closed her eyes. The re-opening of the door, however, told her to beware, and, when

Sir Edward came back into the room, he found her to all appearance perfectly calm. His own sensations were, however, now so harrowing, that he almost ceased to observe those of his companion. He was witnessing over again the agonizing death scene at Florence, the impassioned accents of the dying man were ringing in his ears, and his heart was too full for smaller feelings. It seemed as if contempt alone gave him power to proceed; and when he spoke again there was a cutting sound in his voice that made Leonora start. It might, however, only be caused by remorse for what he had done. She remembered how often she had heard him say, that "nothing could justify a man in fighting a duel." She remembered it perfectly, even at that moment.

"This is what I was charged to deliver," he said abruptly, as he laid upon the table close to her what appeared to be a large box. It was wrapped up in paper, and had a thick cord tied round it. Leonora knew instantly what

it was; but, true to herself, she quietly said, "Thank you, Sir Edward, for the trouble you have taken. I dare say this was some commission of my father's; when he comes in we can examine it together. But you look ill, Sir Edward," she added in a voice of alarm, as she saw his step actually totter as he turned round to take up his hat. "You surely will not think of driving yourself home. Do sit down till you are better—pray, do!"

The plaintive, sympathizing tone in which these words were uttered, had no effect upon Sir Edward, who did not even look at her as he hurriedly replied—

"Thank you very much; but no—I must go—I must go at once! I cannot bear my own thoughts!" and bowing to her, as it were mechanically, he turned quickly to the door and disappeared.

Leonora heard a sound in her ears like the furious rushing of waves as the door closed behind him, but she merely put her hand to her

head, and then went to the window. She stood quietly there until she saw the phaeton of Sir Edward pass through the park gate, and then turning away, she hastily took up the letter and the box he had left upon the table, and went up-stairs to her own room.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE is some limit to all things, and even the inveterate heartlessness of the cold-blooded Leonora gave way before the appalling sorrow of the moment. When alone, with the last relics of the dead, the recollection of past days forced itself upon her. She drew forth the letter from her pocket, and, with eyes now blinded with tears, gazed long upon it ere she could find courage to open it. There is something sacred in the sealed wishes of one who has passed from earth; and even Leonora felt awed by the anticipation of what that letter might contain. The burning love of the writer rose up vividly before her; but in another moment her own selfish hardness had taken alarm, and, mingling with her sorrow, came the fear of

what those dying words might exact. She dreaded lest some fresh sacrifice was to be demanded of her, and for a moment she resolved not to open the letter. The next moment, however, she reflected on the folly of such a thought, and then she hastily broke the seal.

A small gold key fell from the folds of the paper; she did not stop to pick it up, but her eye devoured the few lines of writing that were within, as though her life depended upon the speed with which this task was performed. There was little in them to alarm, though much to grieve. Some hurried words of passionate love, and a farewell, both touching and solemn, formed the contents of the letter, at the bottom of which was written, in an almost illegible hand—"I send you the only letters I have of yours, and all my jewels; wear them for my sake; and oh! Leonora, remember, that if ever you forget me, God will forget you."

She shuddered, and pressed the letter to her lips. She knew too well what those parting words

were intended to convey. For some minutes she sat as if lost in thought; but before very long, incredible as it may appear, other feelings were creeping into her bosom besides sorrow and remorse. In a little while she seemed to have perfectly recovered : she got up from the sofa upon which she had been sitting, and, carefully locking her door, prepared to open the box which had hitherto lain by her side.

Though tolerably familiar with all the objects which she supposed it to contain, she could not refrain from feasting her eyes upon them, now they were legally and actually her own. She was, however, not prepared for the dazzling splendour that met her view. The whole case was completely filled with jewels of the finest kind. Not only did she recognise some which the Marchese Colonna had shown her, and entreated her to wear; but there were many others which she had never seen, and in particular some of an antique form and setting, which were of marvellous beauty.

With the delight of a child she tried on several of the ornaments, and then replaced them in their case. It was not until that moment that she perceived that they were the sole occupants of it. The letters which she expected to have found within it were nowhere to be discovered.

In vain she searched in every secret drawer; nothing but brilliant rows of diamonds, or costly pearls, met her anxious eye. Decidedly her letters were not in the box. She stood aghast as this certainty forced itself upon her mind. What was to be done in order to recover her loss? The letters, she well knew, were of little consequence, except as proofs of her intimate acquaintance with the person to whom they were addressed; but as this fact she ultimately intended to deny, the possession of them would have at least secured her that tranquillity which it seemed she was now not destined to enjoy. She saw, however, in a moment the helplessness of her position. No effort on her part could aid her to recover her

loss. To apply to Sir Edward Devereux for information on the subject was totally out of the question, and he was the only person who was the least likely to know any thing of the affairs of the Marchese. This sudden misfortune was a considerable drawback to the vivid pleasure which the accession of so much wealth had caused her; but after some time spent in vain regrets, she recovered her spirits, and resolved to trust to chance for an extrication from the new difficulty that threatened.

With renewed vivacity she turned again to the contemplation of her glittering treasures. How she longed to exhibit them to her friends! It was not until she began to consider how this had best be done, that she perceived the very embarrassing position in which the sudden possession of so much splendour must necessarily place her. She was the unmarried daughter of a country gentleman of very moderate, not to say humble means—how could she then venture to appear decked out with

ornaments of absolutely regal magnificence? For a moment her heart had filled with softness, but now the spirit of intrigue and deceit re-entered it with double strength. Some new stratagem must be devised wherewith to delude the world; but above all, and before all, her father—her kind, trusting, devoted father, must be deceived. Some plausible tale must be constructed which would account for many of her new treasures, while the existence of others might be easily suppressed. Mr. Stratford was not gifted with much curiosity, and his implicit confidence in his child made him quite ready to accept as a fact every thing she chose him to believe.

In an instant Leonora had devised a plan by which she was certain to succeed. Not more than a month had elapsed since she had received intelligence of the death of a very old friend of Mr. Stratford's; one who had always shown the greatest affection for herself. Madame Satriani had died at Genoa; and, just

before her death, had written a most touching letter of kindness to her, congratulating her and her father upon their unexpected accession of fortune. One expression in it had particularly flattered the vanity of Leonora, and she had not failed, more than once, to impress it upon the mind of her father. He, however, at that moment, could not see with any certainty the means of realizing her wishes; he, therefore, had only smiled, and stroked down her glossy hair as Leonora repeated the words of the good old Madame Satriani.

“You must be presented at court now, my dear Leonora. Such beauty as yours must not waste itself in a country place, however charming it may be.” Leonora was quite of the same opinion. Now, as she beheld the jewels sparkling in her hair, the idea suddenly recurred to her, together with the thought that her old friend at Genoa might easily be made the pretended donor of so much wealth. Leonora was enchanted with her plan, and resolved that

not only should Mr. Stratford believe the truth of her assertion, but that he should, also, make the world adopt the same belief. The world, however, she well knew, was not quite so easily deceived; and the world of Whittington, small as it was, she most particularly dreaded. It seemed to be made up of ears, eyes, and tongues. Nothing could escape the vigilance of the two former; and the latter were, of course, kept in perpetual exercise. The heart of Leonora sunk as she thought of the component parts of the society in which her present residence necessarily involved her. Above all, she most dreaded Belinda White and her *coterie*.

Between the sagacity and popularity of Belinda, and the distinctive *spécialités* of her three friends, nothing could, for even a day, remain a secret in the village. They possessed an exact inventory of the property of every body; particularly of every thing appertaining to the toilets of the ladies. Not even a yard of ribbon or a morsel of lace could enter the house of any of

them, without it being duly descanted on by the others; and this solely for their own purposes. Mrs. Blakemore gathered up her information in order to condemn the "puerile vanities of her sex:" the "superior woman" could not abide them. Mrs. Bedingfield must criticize, not from ill-nature, but to show the purity of her own taste, and the extent of her information; and Mrs. Percy Linklater watched jealously the acquisitions of her friends, in order to bestow her usual meed of flattery, in the hope that it would one day blossom and bring forth. Poor Mrs. Linklater! she had long been awaiting the birth of the offspring of her toadyism and lies.

This redoubtable trio, the phalanx of Belinda White, was fully understood by Leonora. To give it battle in a fair field would have been impossible as well as impolitic; therefore nothing remained to be done but to enlist under its banners, and appear at least to make common cause with its enterprising members. This Leonora had so successfully contrived to

do, that she enjoyed the confidence of all her companions; but this high position only gave her a clearer insight into their manœuvres, and showed her how difficult it would be for her to deceive so many dear friends at once.

The history of the jewels once circulated, their surprise would have no bounds; their rapture and congratulations would be overpowering. They would insist upon knowing every thing that could be learned as to the birth, parentage, and education of this wonderful Madame Satriani, who could leave such magnificent legacies to people in no way related to her. They would study genealogies, and write letters, and weary all their acquaintances who had ever been out of England, in order to find out some person who, at least, had had a glimpse of the marvellous Italian lady. In a moment Leonora doubted of the feasibility of her plan. Madame Satriani had been too well known in the fashionable world in Italy, to make it quite safe thus to trifle with her name. Relations might

spring up, and difficulties and confusion ensue, were the story all at once made too public.

These reflections were startling; but, one by one, all her fears faded away, and she returned to her original opinion. The mystery was so profound, that at last she persuaded herself it would baffle the ingenuity even of the Whittington *coterie*. At all events, the danger was at a great distance, and much might be accomplished before there was any real risk of discovery. One point, however, it was imperatively necessary to guard with the utmost nicety. The arrival of Sir Edward Devereux from Italy must be entirely forgotten, before attention was called to any fresh event connected with that sunny land. It would be madness just now to breathe a word of Madame Satriani and her legacy. This decision did not admit of a doubt; and, with a sigh of regret, Leonora locked up her new possessions in an empty wardrobe in her room, and put the key into her desk. It was very provoking to be obliged to do so; but

she did not hesitate a moment. And the letter—that poor “last letter,” the expiring sigh of a breaking heart—what was to be its fate? One more kiss from the beautiful coral lips of Leonora, and then it was quietly reduced to ashes. No memorial now remained on earth of the sorrow of one, and the guilt of both. At least, so fondly imagined that heartless woman; who, if she gave a sigh of regret to the past, did not scruple to indulge in the brightest dream of the future. There was, however, one fear lurking in her mind, that, in spite of all her efforts, she could not entirely drive away.

With all her perspicacity she could not decide, in her own mind, the extent of the information possessed by Sir Edward as to her real history. He was aware of the mad passion which the Marchese had entertained for her. That did not, however, of a necessity, substantiate her guilty participation in it. She well remembered the extreme natural indiscretion of her lover, except when under the control of her own

vigilance and threats. She knew that at first she could not have trusted him; but, latterly, he had become more discreet, and the new habit of keeping his affairs secret from the world, had seemed in no way irksome to him. She, therefore, might reasonably indulge in the hope and belief, that no more had been revealed by him to Sir Edward, than had been absolutely necessary in order to explain to him the reason of his writing, and his anxiety that his messages should be delivered. This, although very annoying to her, was perhaps natural to have occurred between two men who had been intimate friends, and it did not necessitate any further communication; at the extreme hour it was not likely that a man should say aught that must have the effect of ruining the reputation of the woman he professed to love.

Leonora had yet to learn the wild bitterness of a heart torn by jealousy and suspicion, and the cruelty even of its love. She had roused a frantic passion in a nature full of fire—she had

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Lady Alice Percy returned from her drive with Leonora, her first care was to look for her mother, Lady Glanberris, in the accustomed corner of a small blue drawing-room which she generally appropriated to herself in the morning. It was a beautiful bright-looking room, commanding a still more beautiful view of the park; and many were the happy hours that Alice, with her little sister Edith, had passed there, under the eye of the best, as well as the most indulgent, of mothers. How often had Alice, when a prey to her childish sorrows, flown to that little blue room as a frightened bird returns to its nest! When any thing had gone wrong, first in the nursery and afterwards in the school-room, how often had she

watched for the hour when she knew her mother would be safely seated in a sort of half-round arm-chair which had stood in that room for ages, and crept to her side in the glad certainty of finding comfort and support! These were happy moments to Alice; and now that she was emancipated from the thralldom of the school-room, and on the eve of coming out in the world, she clung to all the habits and remembrances of her childhood, with a warmth that showed the affectionate nature of her heart.

Alice was the eldest of the three children of Lord and Lady Glanberris. She was five years older than Lord Beaumont, her only brother, and Edith was two years his junior; so that Alice was looked upon as a great lady both by her brother and sister, who expected her to be a sort of second mama to them, whenever Lady Glanberris was either absent or too much engaged to be able to attend to them. This was not, however, very frequently the case; for the society of her children were, to

Lady Glanberris, a pleasure far more attractive than any that the world could offer. She adored them all, especially Alice, who was now nearly seventeen, and a most charming girl.

Alice was very handsome, tall and stately, yet graceful and feminine, with small hands and feet, and a step as light as that of a fawn. Her features were quite regular enough for beauty, and her large bright brown eyes, rather darker than her hair, and her oval face, with a complexion like the hue of a wild-rose, certainly justified the opinion of all her friends, who declared she would be the most beautiful "*débutante* of the season," whenever she appeared in the world. Alice had often heard this said, but it did not make the slightest impression upon her. There was much more danger of her caring too little about her appearance than too much; for she was somewhat thoughtless, and her personal advantages were a matter of very little interest to her. It was delightful to see her total freedom from vanity;

and the absence of this dangerous and debasing fault gave to her manner a freshness and simplicity, that distinguished her very much from young ladies of more worldly aspirations.

If there was any thing in the world of which the meek, humble-minded Lady Glanberris could be unduly proud, it was of Alice, and the manner in which she had been brought up. A good, domestic, wholesome education had this cherished daughter of a noble house received, and the consequences were clearly perceptible; for a more honest, well principled, and dutiful girl did not exist, nor one in whom her parents could place more implicit faith. There was no occasion to watch her movements, control her actions, or listen to every word she uttered; Alice could neither do nor say any thing which the most fastidious could have wished undone or unsaid, for the principle of right was in her mind and in her heart. She loved her mother with an almost idolatrous affection, and never was a mother more deserving of such love.

Lady Glanberris was possessed of every virtue which could adorn a woman, in whatever station of life she might have been placed. She was affectionate without being weak, religious without parade, and generous to a romantic degree, without being wasteful or careless. On the contrary, no one was a better manager of a household, and the establishment at Winton Park was always maintained with great splendour; but all was in the most perfect taste, and thoroughly well ordered: and the good countess reigned over her dominions happily and quietly, loved and respected by all. Her countenance revealed the qualities of her heart as distinctly as possible. No one could look upon that sweet, fair face, with its mild blue eyes and kindly smile, without feelings of pleasure and respect. She seemed so thoroughly good, pure-minded, and simple in her ways, that it turned away all the envy and malice which her high rank and position might have excited among the small-minded and covet-

ous, and she was every where deservedly popular.

The earl, her husband, was a fitting partner for a being endowed with so much gentle and genuine goodness. He was a noble-looking man, some years older than his wife, a fine, frank, good-tempered person, very fond of his place, very fond of shooting, hunting, and all country amusements, and with an innocent love for trifles and trifling objects, which made him seem still more domestic every day. To beautify his place, and promote the happiness and comfort of all around him, whether friends or merely dependants, was the great delight of his existence. He cared very little for the world, and though not without strong political opinions, and a certain degree of ambition, he had not devoted his life to public affairs, but attended more to the careful administration of his own, and the more immediate interests of those by whom he was surrounded.

By far the greatest person in his county, his

possessions were almost a principality, and under his patriarchal wing every member of his family loved to gather; so that Winton Park was looked upon as a general place of refuge and support: and the protection of its name and acquaintance of its owner anxiously coveted, not only by those who could claim kindred with him, but by many who could boast of no such advantage. Neither Lord nor Lady Glanberris were niggardly in their hospitalities — what they gave was freely given and as freely accepted; for there is no mistaking kindness that springs from the heart.

This was the happy home of the amiable and beautiful Alice Percy, and it is not surprising that, blessed with such a home and such parents, she should have been the joyous, loving, trusting being which she was; for she had never known others than those she could love and trust. It was beautiful to see a girl, now nearly seventeen, and one who had never been unduly secluded from society, so utterly guileless and

free from all vanity and affectation. She was as simple in all her ways as though still a child, and she would have scorned as well as loathed the idea of ever practising the smallest concealment. Every thought, every wish of her mind was laid open to the eyes of her parents, and this without the slightest compulsion on their part. Alice had always found them her best friends, and to whose, rather than to their indulgent ear, could she more gladly have communicated her sorrows or her joys? Had she sought other counsel and support, she would have felt as if she was defrauding them of their most sacred right; and to repay their tender love with so cruel a wound, seemed to her the greatest crime she could commit.

It was this feeling that had caused the sudden chill she had experienced, when, during her drive home from the Hermitage with Leonora, the latter had advised her "not to tell." As Alice had replied, "she could not have slept, if she had not told every thing to her mother." It

was perfectly true, and it was this feeling that had made her silent, if not sad, during the remainder of the drive home, and that prompted her, immediately on the departure of her friend, to seek her mother's room, in order to relate to her the events of the day. Alice was, however, doomed to disappointment. Lady Glanberris had gone to take a long drive with some of her guests, and would certainly not return until dressing-time; there was, therefore, no chance that day of her having even a quarter of an hour's conversation with her daughter.

Alice, as she sat down, rather in a discontented mood, in the great blue arm-chair in her mother's room, felt a slight degree of anger rising up in her heart against her dear friend Leonora. She felt as if circumstances were forcing her to do as she had been advised by her; and then she remembered how often she had observed Leonora practise the same precept towards her own father, and how little Mr. Stratford ever seemed aware of the move-

ments or engagements of his daughter: they actually appeared like two strangers living in the same house. She wondered whether their thoughts were as independent of each other as their actions. It was the first time she had thought Leonora less than perfection; and it was such an uncomfortable thought that she would not dwell upon it, but only wished over and over again that she had not spoken the words that she had heard.

All that day passed heavily to Alice; there were so many people in the house, that she had not a moment to herself; and the next day was entirely consumed by a long ride she had promised to take, in order to accompany Miss Markland part of her way home. At last every one was gone, and there was a prospect of one quiet evening, when she might have some conversation with her father and mother. She waited rather impatiently until the happy, little, quiet family dinner they so seldom enjoyed was over, and Lord Glanberris was comfortably established

.

in the small drawing-room with her and her mother, together with his county newspaper and cup of coffee. She felt as if she had a great secret to tell, when in fact it was a very trifling one, and utterly uninteresting to every one except the lady who was the object of it. It was, however, with a face of great gravity, that, as soon as she had settled herself to her work by the side of the little table near Lady Glanberris, she began—"Mama," she said, "did you know that I went to the Hermitage yesterday?"

"Yes, my child, quite well! Do you forget that you left word with Lady Markland, that Leonora had called for you? She told me the moment I came in from the garden. How did you find Belinda?"

"In the greatest possible delight, mama; and your veranda was the admiration of every body. The luncheon table was put out in it, just in front of the middle window where the tulip-tree is, so there was not a gleam of sun; it was as cool and shady as possible."

"I am so glad I thought of it," replied Lady Glanberris. "Poor Belinda used to complain so much of her eyes; no wonder, in that little white house perched up on a hill!"

"Oh! the house looks as different as possible now, mama: it seems at least twice as large, and Belinda is going to give a breakfast to show off your present. She is coming here to-morrow, to talk to you about it."

"Who is coming to-morrow, Alice?" inquired Lord Glanberris, looking up from his newspaper, as his daughter's voice caught his ear.

"Belinda White, papa," replied Alice.

"Ah! poor Belinda, she is welcome; and she is coming to stay, I hope?"

"No, papa, only to consult about a breakfast she is going to give."

"A breakfast!" echoed Lord Glanberris with a pleased look; "and where is it to be? Tell me all about it, Alice;" and he actually laid down his beloved county paper, that he might give his whole attention to the words of his

daughter. Any merry-making in the country was his especial delight, and he did not the least despise it because it was to be given at a little villa instead of a palace as magnificent as his own. Alice minutely described the programme of the *fête* as far as it had been decided on, and then he said, looking at his wife—

“We must do something to help her, Emily: what can you think of?”

“Oh! I know what I should do,” interrupted Alice, joyously.

“What would you do, Alice? Let us have your opinion first,” said Lady Glanberris, with a smile.

“I would send the band. It would be the prettiest thing possible to have music in the arbutus walk. It is not too close to the house, and they might play there all the evening.”

“An excellent idea!” exclaimed Lord Glanberris. “It will make the party so much gayer. I like music in the open air.”

“But what will become of poor Staunton, with

his two fiddles, and his flute? If we supply the music, he will think himself horribly ill used. He attends all the parties at Whittington; and he thinks himself a second Strauss: he will be miserable if he is not engaged!" observed Lady Glanberris.

"He can play inside the house," answered Alice; "some people will be sure to stay late, and you know we cannot dance in the dark, so I do not think there will be much dancing on the grass."

"I see you are preparing to stay all night, Alice," said Lady Glanberris, good-naturedly; "so poor Belinda will be overrun with company. I think the best thing I can do is to contribute something to eat, and send Lemaire to arrange a nice supper-table. The supper is always the most troublesome part of a *fête* in a small house."

"You see, Alice, what grievous troubles you have brought upon your mother by your drive to the Hermitage yesterday. If young ladies will go gadding about the country, they must

get into scrapes," said Lord Glanberris, with a kind smile to his daughter; and he was just going to relapse into his newspaper, when Alice put her little white hand upon it, saying, "I have got into a much worse scrape than that, papa. Now, don't read any more, and I will tell you about it."

"Well, I suppose I must wait," said her father with a resigned air; and he laid down the paper quietly, although there was a most interesting account of the yearly meeting of the agricultural society of the county, and he had been three times interrupted already that day, just as he came to the report of his own speech.

"Well," said Alice, gravely, "what do you think of my having done exactly the very thing you told me not to do—got acquainted yesterday with no less a personage than Mrs. Percy Linklater?"

"My dear Alice!" exclaimed Lady Glanberris, in a tone of dismay; but Lord Glanberris only burst out laughing as he replied—

“So she has succeeded at last—has she? I am not the least surprised at it; such a perseveringly impudent woman I certainly never met with! It was just like her to attack you when you were alone.”

“I am exceedingly sorry, papa,” said Alice in the most gentle tone. “I assure you I did every thing I could to avoid her, without being atrociously rude; but she would not be avoided, and actually waited for us on the road: way-laid us completely;” Alice then recounted the whole history of the pocket-handkerchief, at which Lord Glanberris only smiled, and exchanged a glance of intelligence with his wife. Amiable as they were, they were not quite so credulous as Alice; but neither did they look upon her very innocent adventure as any thing that she could have avoided, though she went on deploring it as if it had been a real misfortune. Her mother at last consoled her by saying—

“Do not vex yourself, dear Alice; you have

done nothing in the least wrong. If the woman was so civil as to pick up your handkerchief, you could not help thanking her for it: you were not likely to imagine that it was only a trick, in order to force herself upon your acquaintance, as I am afraid it was."

"No! I never thought about it," said Alice frankly; "only, as you had asked me to keep away from her, I was vexed at what had happened; but if you do not mind it, mama, I am sure I do not. I shall not be obliged to do more than make a civil bow if we ever meet again."

Lady Glanberris smiled again at her husband, as she replied—"The only reason I had, my dear child, for not wishing to make her acquaintance was, not so much from not knowing who or what she is, but that your father, who has seen her, thought her a very forward and disagreeable woman; therefore, of course, her society could be no pleasure to me."

"But is it true that she is a relation of ours?"

she *told* me that she was," said Alice suddenly, for she had forgotten to mention it.

"I should say, certainly not!" replied Lady Glanberris; "her husband may have been christened Percy, either from caprice or after some one in our family, but that does not constitute relationship."

"Well, I must say," observed Alice, "I think it does seem rather odd her saying so, and your not knowing it, mama. I should think people, particularly the heads of families, always knew who were their relations. Do they not, papa?"

"Certainly I should say, my child, and I have not the slightest belief, that this Mrs. Percy Linklater is any real relation of ours. All I know about her is, that for the last two years she has been persecuting me in the most cruel manner for patronage, for money, or for advancement in any shape she could obtain it, and always on the plea of our relationship. She used to sit in my room until I was forced

to leave it myself, in order to get rid of her; and, having ever afterwards declined her visits, I have been inundated with letters—not letters but pamphlets—twenty pages at a time, all numbered and tied up in the corner with blue ribbon.”

“And what did you do, papa?” asked Alice, laughing.

“Why, at last, having failed to get rid of the plea of relationship, I told her the truth—that she was using a weapon against herself; for, if her husband were twenty times my relation, I could not recommend him either for public or private patronage, unless certain of his principles as well as his abilities. It was the exact truth; for I would not advance my own son, unless sure that he would do honour to his family as well as to his country. I cannot imagine any one doing the contrary; though all those begging and pushing people care for nothing, so as they get something through one’s patronage.”

"It certainly seems to me very hazardous, recommending people one knows nothing at all about," said Alice with a very wise look.

"One does not do so for a servant," observed Lady Glanberris, "for a poor person to whom a good word is a fortune; and I think much more care ought to be observed in putting forward ladies and gentlemen, or people who wish to be thought such, as the position they seek to hold would naturally be one of much greater responsibility." The mild blue eyes of Lady Glanberris were gently turned to her husband as she said these words, and he readily replied—

"I quite agree with you, my dear Emily. It is just the principle upon which I have always acted."

"What strange people there seem to be in the world!" said Alice, opening her large eyes wonderingly; and then she added, turning to her father—"But how did you escape at last, papa? It looks as if she still had some hopes

of you, by her seizing upon me. Have you quite got rid of her? ”

“Got rid of her—oh, no!” was the reply, accompanied with something very like a groan; “who ever got rid of such a woman as Mrs. Percy Linklater? Her next move was to pin me down to the question of *principles*; and the twenty daily pages tied with blue ribbon, went to prove the marvellous purity and integrity of the most adored of husbands. I certainly ought to be impressed with the wonderful nobility of mind and greatness of soul of Mr. Percy Linklater, for I have received volumes on the subject from his indefatigable wife.”

“And did you answer them, papa? What patience you must have had!”

“At first I tried to send a few lines of civil answer, as I think every man is bound to do when a woman writes to him; but one unlucky word brought a fresh *avalanche* upon me. The word ‘abilities’ completed my ruin! The cor-

respondence was languishing, but it then took a new turn, and every 'ability' ever possessed by any man filling any situation, from a game-keeper up to a first lord of the treasury, was declared to be possessed by this miraculous Mr. Percy Linklater. This was too much, so I gave up answering; and then, of course, his gentle helpmate began to assail me and my family with very scurrilous abuse, which of course did not fail to reach my ears. All my scruples vanished then; I saw I had not been mistaken."

"You seldom are, I think," said Lady Glanberris; "so you see, Alice, we have not much to lose by not knowing Mrs. Linklater."

"What a very disagreeable person she must be, and how odd that she should write all that instead of her husband! Perhaps he knows nothing about it—perhaps he may not be as bad and forward as his wife," kindly suggested Alice.

"I took care to inquire from very good

authority what sort of man he was," answered Lord Glanberris. "God forbid, I should have refused any help I could give to a fellow creature who was deserving of it; but, from all I learned, I believe one to be as little to be respected as the other! They appear to have lived a very low life abroad; all their connections and acquaintances are in a very low grade, and they seem to be people vulgarly called 'living by their wits.' When they came to settle at Whittington, I made it my business to find out all about them; so now, my dear child, you see why your mother said she did not wish you to know them."

"I do, papa; but indeed I did not want a reason," said Alice, getting up and standing by her father; and then, as she bent down and kissed his forehead, she added, "You or mama's saying you don't wish me to do any thing, is quite enough for me; but, if she asks me to introduce her, what shall I say?"

"Introduce her by all means," replied Lord

Glanberris, laughing; "the acquaintance will never go farther; and neither your mother, nor I are afraid of losing caste by making a stiff bow to Mrs. Percy Linklater."

"I will then, papa—Good-night now. I am rather tired after my ride, and I will go to bed."


"Good-night, my child; just put that little table nearer to me before you go, that I may finish my paper in peace,"—and Alice, having done as he had asked, saw him settle himself comfortably down in his arm-chair, and begin to read over again the whole history of the agricultural meeting.

CHAPTER XL

WHILE this dissertation, so little favourable to her designs, had been carried on at Winton Park, the object of it, Mrs. Percy Linklater, was congratulating herself with no little complacency on the success of her scheme. She, however, had not been condemned to wait four-and-twenty hours before she could recount the events of the day to her "noble-minded husband;" for visitors at Ivy Lodge, which was the name of their cottage at Whittington, were few and far between, it not being desirable that too many prying eyes should be permitted to view the interior, which was not always fit to be seen. Now and then there was a day set apart for the reception of company, and then Mrs. Percy Linklater, in her best gown, and

seated in a small sitting-room, called the "front parlour"—a room ten feet square, with red stuff curtains and horsehair sofa—did the honours with magnificent *aplomb*, but at other times the door of Ivy Lodge was hermetically closed.

This day, however, not being one of the "public days," Mrs. Linklater was at no loss to ascertain where she should look for her husband. She knew exactly where he was and how he had been occupied, all the time she had been at Belinda White's luncheon and pacing the dusty road in order to intercept Lady Alice upon her return. It was Saturday, and that day the great Mr. Percy Linklater was always to be found at home, at least by his wife; for the laundress had not brought home his "things" from the wash, and, such was the scarcity of linen in his wardrobe, that he could not make the two collars and two pair of cuffs he had worn alternately since Monday, sufficiently presentable at the extreme end of the week to bear the light of a summer's day. He



therefore was compelled, as he usually was, to do as his wife desired him, and keep himself out of sight until renovated by the returning Sunday.

Mrs. Percy Linklater, aware of this fact, was quite sure of a listener, and an attentive one; which was not always the case with her and her communications. This was perhaps one of the reasons why she walked over the sharp stones of the pavement—for Ivy Lodge was in one of the old back streets of the pretty village—with a step at once firm and light, and even pulled up her best gown, without the smallest fear of showing her very thick legs, as she stepped over the gutter. There was fortunately nobody opposite but a baker, and his window was so full of long narrow loaves that he could scarcely have seen out of it, if he even had been maliciously disposed. So Mrs. Percy Linklater hurried home, and went straight into the little front parlour, where she found the object of her affectionate solicitude in his usual attitude, seated in a

straight-backed chair, with his legs resting upon another, his hands in his pockets and a cigar in his mouth. Mrs. Percy Linklater just looked in, saw that all was right, and then went into the opposite room, which was the dormitory of the happy couple, and the only one besides the parlour of which the house could boast, some little nooks at the back forming at once the kitchen and bed-room for the unhappy maid of all work, who was called "the cook."

It was a good while before Mrs. Percy Linklater re-appeared, and then she was scarcely recognizable in her dirty faded and stained *peignoir* of brown merino. It did not show to advantage her short clumsy figure; but her little round black eyes twinkled with such intense delight, that her hatchet face looked quite beaming when she took her place upon the black sofa exactly opposite her husband. A cloud of smoke filled the room, but the figure of Mr. Percy Linklater was visible in the

midst of it. He was a small man, rather inclining to be fat, with very light hair, grey eyes, and a foolish though cunning expression of countenance, which was rendered still more peculiar by his having lost one of his front teeth.

He looked discontentedly for a moment at his wife when she sat down, but said nothing; he was watching the gradual diminution of his cigar with any thing but satisfaction: it was the last that he had. Mrs. Percy Linklater looked at him fixedly as he lay upon his two chairs, with a greasy black handkerchief round his bare neck, and his feet pushed half-way into a pair of slippers that had once been red and were now white, particularly at the toes. Perhaps her mind misgave her a little: he certainly did not look very aristocratic. The thought was disagreeable, but the smoke was the more immediate nuisance. Mrs. Percy Linklater began to sneeze. For more reasons than one she hated cigars. She was a spiteful little woman; but at that moment she did not

want particularly to irritate her husband out of his usual submissive mood, so she began gently—

“I wish, Percy, you would not smoke so much. The smell of cigars is detestable in a drawing-room.”

“A drawing-room!” echoed Mr. Percy Linklater, with a rueful look at the stuff curtains. I don’t think it will hurt this one much, at all events;” and with a sort of sigh, as he thought of the next Saturday without a cigar, he drew a long breath, and sent a much larger portion of smoke than usual into the face of his wife, who in a somewhat heightened key exclaimed—“If you would only smoke out of doors: this abominable smell always sticking to one is so vulgar, just as if he lived in an ale-house! And, besides, it ruins one’s clothes.”

“Clothes!” echoed Mr. Percy Linklater, slightly elevating his shoulders as he recollected the narrow bottom drawer in the next room,

and how easily it held the all of his little wardrobe.

“Well, I don’t think it will hurt them much either; and, as for smoking out of doors, why you know, Mrs. P., as well as I do, that it’s impossible. Isn’t this Saturday? I should like to know how I’m to go out, Mrs. P.”

“Mrs. Percy, if you please,” replied the lady so addressed, and endeavouring to speak very gently, though her copper-coloured cheek was growing blue with rage. “My dear Percy, if you knew how very vulgar those abbreviations are, I am sure you would not use them. You know, love, I can’t bear to find fault with any thing you do; but—if you could be a little, more particular in the choice of your appellations.”

“Well, I will try; but, somehow or other, I always forget, Sally.”

“Sally!—There again, Percy! Can’t you say Sarah, when I have asked you so often? It is quite as easy to say ‘Sarah,’ I should

think," replied Mrs. Linklater, with great dignity.

"No, it's not! One can't get out of one's old ways—at least I can't," observed Mr. Percy Linklater frankly, and he gave a sigh to the days gone by. "You were Sally Muggeridge when I first knew you, and you seem to me Sally still. Ah! Mrs. P., you were glad enough to be called Mrs. P. then. My poor old father—he never called you any thing else, and I never heard you complain of it! You weren't too fine for your poor little Peter then."

"Hush! for heaven's sake hold your tongue!" said Mrs. Percy under her breath, and starting up to listen at the door; "how can you be so imprudent? The kitchen door is always open."

"Yes, but Betsy is out," replied her husband coolly—"I sent her to try and get me six pennyworth of cigars at Swan's the grocer on credit; I told her I had lost my purse. She can't have come back yet; so there is no danger.

of her finding out that my name is Peter, instead of Percy. At least not to-day," he added, with a malicious look at his wife, whose cheeks now looked like too small ripe apples. She resumed her place on the sofa, and said sternly—

"Mr. Percy Linklater, do you mean to ruin yourself and me—to mar our fortune—for ever?"

"No, my dear love, certainly not!" was the meek reply; "I thought we came here to make it."

"And it is made," solemnly replied his wife, "if you will only be guided by me."

"Made—is it? Well, I haven't seen much of it yet, at all events!" pettishly answered the submissive husband, as he shook the ashes tenderly from the end of his cigar, and the draught from the door scattered them all over Mrs. Percy's brown merino.

"And, as to being guided, I should like to know what man ever was so guided as I am?"

Haven't I done every earthly thing a man could do who is lucky enough to have so clever a wife? Didn't I give up my shop in Cripple-gate when I was just beginning to do a little business, because you had got a legacy and wanted to set up being a lady? Poor Peter Linklater wasn't a good enough name; so didn't I allow you to christen me over again, Percy instead of Peter? You would have got rid of Linklater too if you could! You wanted to make it Leicester. You only kept to the L's because of the marks on our six spoons; but that I couldn't stand! No; Mrs. P., there I own I did not suffer myself to be guided. I have some English blood in me, Mrs. P., and Linklater was my father's name before me, and he was as honest a man as ever measured an ell of cloth, though he did keep a second-hand clothes shop in Houndsditch."

Mr. Percy Linklater, elevating his voice as he went on, elevated his passion also; and, expanding his chest, and taking his feet from the

chair upon which both his slippers preferred remaining, he sat erect, with one hand still in his pocket, and the other holding the precious remnant of the cigar, now reduced to a melancholy smallness of proportion. The little man looked rather fierce, though he was not yet quite in a passion.

The blood of the Linklaters, if not completely roused, had at least been gently stirred; and it might require considerable cooling down, before this noble descendant of the slop-seller in Houndsditch could be reduced to his usually passive and submissive state. Mrs. Percy Linklater looked at him in dismay. He had a great variety of moods. To-day evidently he was in the argumentative mood, when she knew that it was sometimes next to impossible to make him cease talking; and she trembled lest Betsy should come back. The discussion must be stopped at any cost, or the consequences might be fatal. Mr. Percy Linklater's words were not always as controllable as his actions; and,

if once the smallest glimmering of their secret history was suffered to escape, there was an end of all her hopes. She hastened to assuage the storm she had raised, and, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, pretended to cry. Her husband looked at her for a moment, and then, muttering to himself, "Stuff and nonsense!" he put up his legs again, his feet re-entered the yawning slippers, and he continued his smoking; though with a little more care than before, for the cigar was growing so very short. After a few hysterical sobs, during which she had had time to consider which course she should pursue, Mrs. Percy took her handkerchief from her face, and, exhibiting a countenance which was intended to represent patient resignation struggling with acute feeling deeply wounded, she said—

"I am sure, Percy, when I see how you misunderstand all my words and actions, I really don't know what to do. You used to be so very amiable; but, since we have been here,

you have been quite different—quite cruel to me: savage I may almost say!” and here the pocket-handkerchief was resumed.


Mr. Percy Linklater, who had expected the attack in a different tone, was somewhat touched, and taking his cigar in his right hand, answered—

“Because, my dear love, I am moped to death. This infernal place is enough to dissolve the senses of any man. I wasn’t here a week before I felt as if I was turned into lukewarm water. Nothing to do, nothing to see, nothing to eat, and nothing——”

“To drink,” added his tender wife sarcastically.

“You’ll allow, Mrs. P.,” he continued, without taking any notice of her remark, “that such a life as that is not likely to make a man jolly. I am sure, my dear love, that all the time we lived at Boulogne you never had to reproach me with want of spirits.”

“There was no lack of them, certainly,” she



replied, with an expressive shake of the head, and a very woe-begone look.

"No man ever had better," went on Mr. Percy Linklater, warming with his subject. "Why, your little P. was as lively as a tomtit; and no wonder, for there I had something of every thing! There was the *table d'hôte*, and the *café*, and the billiards, and the *quilles*, and the *écarté*, and the promenade in the evening, and fifty other things, and lots of good fellows to take a glass with you; but here, what is there in this dull, poking place? A few tabby cats and old women, and psalm-singing and sermon-preaching all the day long. No wonder if a man's soul is plagued out of him! I can't stand it much longer, Mrs. P., and that's flat. I shall go clean out of my mind."

"You wouldn't have far to go, I'm thinking," said his amiable wife sharply, and then she added in a softer tone—

"I am really astonished at you, Percy. I

wonder you can compare the two places for a moment."

"I can't, Mrs. P., and that's the fact!" was the ready reply.

"I should be very much surprised, my love, if you could," rejoined the lady with willing blindness as to his meaning, and lowering her voice almost to a whisper as she spoke; "recollect what we were then—and what we are now," and she looked impressively at him.

"I do, Mrs. P.—I do! And that's the reason I'm so infernally hipped, particularly in the morning," persisted the provoking man.

"Recollect," continued Mrs. Percy in the same tone of admonition, "that was before our good fortune—my good fortune, I should say! We were then *quite* in a private sphere; but a handsome independence requires other appearances. Remember property has its duties as well as its pleasures."

"Yes; but ours seems to be all duty and no pleasure," said her husband doggedly.

"Do you call it no pleasure, Percy, to feel your mind elevated, and your social position improved—immeasurably improved?" asked Mrs. Percy in a tone of theatrical enthusiasm.

"No, I don't, Mrs. P., since you ask me the question. I was much happier when I was poor—that is, when you were poor," he added spitefully.

"When you spent four days a week at the alehouse?" retorted his wife in the same tone.

"When I did as I pleased, ma'am, and lived with my fellows, and didn't talk nonsense about education and gentility. But you, the minute you got a few pounds, you must needs set up for a lady and learn manners! Why, the first thing you did was to get a governess to teach you, and insist on my going to school again. And what good does it do me now that I can talk like a grammar? I was a much happier man when I said 'the ouse,' and 'the orse,' and 'the vinder,' and might ask for a 'weal cutlet,' without being ashamed.

Lord bless you, Sally, let us leave off our gentility and go back to Boulogne—there's a good woman—now, do!"

The voice and countenance of Mr. Percy Linklater underwent a total change, as these jovial ideas floated before him; but the stony look of "his Sally" gave but little encouragement to his hopes, as she answered in a tone more sharp and wiry even than usual, but very calm and dignified—

"Very well, my dear Percy, since I and my way of life are so utterly distasteful to you, there is no reason why I should be a burthen to you. I can remain here, where I have an extremely good position; my money will go further when there is only one to support, and you can go back and live with all your dear friends at Boulogne. We need not make any scandal about it, but just separate quietly."

The light had been gradually going out of the eyes of Mr. Percy Linklater during this speech, until they looked like two little specks

of pale grey slate in his head. Disappointment was not his only feeling; the cunning allusion of his wife to the fact that the money was all hers, had carried dismay to his heart. He had not a farthing of his own in the world.

As the thought seemed to dart through him, he gave an untoward pinch to the unconsumed morsel of cigar that he still held between his finger and thumb. It shivered to atoms in a moment. He looked at it in consternation, and a moral lesson instantly impressed itself upon his mind. He must be more careful, or his fortunes would crumble away even like the hapless cigar. He immediately had recourse to cunning, and, borrowing the example of his wife, he answered in a whimpering tone—

“Now don’t, Sally—don’t, my darling love, go on talking in that way. Who ever said a word about separating? Why, it would be the talk of the whole place—and no one,” he insidiously suggested, “would believe it was because we could not agree, when we’ve been mar-

ried these twenty years! They would bring up that old story about you and the French captain directly, that I had such trouble to put down. I do believe it was that black scarecrow, Mrs. Blakemore, that invented it after all, though she laid it upon Mrs. Bedingfield; and all this because I said Whittington was a stupid place; which after all," he added in his natural voice "my dear Mrs. P., you can't deny."

"Well," replied the lady so addressed, and whose wrath was somewhat appeased by having the upper hand so instantly conceded to her, "I can't say that; since we came, it has been excessively gay,—but remember our object in coming. If we succeed it will have been well worth the trouble, and you will not be sorry to cut Boulogne and all your old acquaintances: we must play a bold game, or remain for ever as we were."

"A bold game enough it is, taking a man's name for our own in order to get something out of him, just because we heard of his giving

a man a curacy because he said he was related to him! It may not be so easy to persuade him of the same thing twice; so I allow the game is bold enough—that does not prevent its being slow enough too;” and the dull winter-day look came again into the eyes of Mr. Percy Linklater, as he indulged in an unchecked yawn, and raised both his arms above his head. The movement jerked off one of his slippers, which his wife with uncommon civility picked up and restored to its proper place. And then she said—in that slow measured tone she had adopted ever since she had learnt it from her governess, and always used when not out of temper—

“We shall see, my dear Percy—we shall see, if you will only have a little patience. Remember the country must be much gayer now, that both Atherston and Winton Park are inhabited. Recollect, neither Sir Edward Devereux nor Lord Glanberris were at home all last winter; that made an immense difference.”

"Well, it did; and, as you say, Sally, it may make more. If one won't do what we want, why, the other may. I suppose," he added, with a chuckle, "we shall have to change our name to Devereux next, for I doubt if the old Earl will do any thing for us."

"He will, if he is properly managed and talked to," replied Mrs. Percy with an air of confidence; "I have been told that Lord Glanberris is a singularly impressionable person. I shall take my measures accordingly."

"Yes; but how are we to get at him, Mrs. P.? that seems to me the chief difficulty. All the people here are so afraid of him, that they would not dare to introduce a fly. I have asked every soul in the town."

"Leave that to me, my love," was the amiable reply of his wife; "I think I can promise you an introduction to the Earl of Glanberris."

"You don't say so, Sally!" exclaimed her husband with animation, for the decided tone of her voice had marvellously re-assured him;

"but how will you manage? you don't know him yourself."

"Through his daughter. I mean to make Lady Alice present me at Belinda White's party," said Mrs. Percy, with an air of triumph. She was obliged for once to tell the truth, for fear of her plans being upset by some blunder on the part of her husband. And so she continued, "I made acquaintance with her to-day at the Hermitage, it does not signify how, and I mean to turn it to account. She is a little fool, blushing at every word she speaks, and will not dare to refuse me. Leave that to me, my dear Percy, and finish your cigar in peace!"

The newly-found condescension and amiability of Mrs. Percy astonished even her unfortunate husband, accustomed as he was to the dictatorial tyranny under which the hundred and fifty pounds a year of his wife compelled him to writhe. He even had a distant hope of another cigar or two being doled out to him, in the moment of expansion in which she was

then indulging; he did not, however, dare to ask for it: he had had his week's allowance, one per day, and, if he said too much about it, he knew that even that would be stopped: the misfortune had happened to him more than once. So he bethought himself, as he had seen children do, of giving a hint: he took his feet off the chair, pulled on his slippers, and went to the window.

"I wonder where Betsy is all this time! I hope she hasn't got me more than six cigars. I shall pay for them next time that I win at commerce. There were eight shillings in the pool last night."

"But you didn't win it," significantly observed his wife.

"No, I know I didn't; but Swan, the grocer, don't know that, and it was to him I sent Betsy, just to try and raise half a dozen. Where can she be all this time?"

"I should hope," said Mrs. Percy Linklater, in her governess-like voice, "that Betsy has been

long enough in my service to understand her business better than to bring any tradesman's parcels in at the front door of my house. There is nothing so vulgar."

A loud bang at the kitchen door, and the sound of heavy footsteps on the tiled floor, attested the truth of the mistress and the obedience of the maid: the truant Betsy had evidently returned. The face of Mr. Percy Linklater brightened, and he turned back from the window. In another moment a prodigious thump upon the parlour door announced her arrival; and Betsy, rushing in, threw down a parcel upon the table with considerable noise. She was a person who never could do any thing quietly, though she looked as if famine might have quieted her, for she was gaunt and thin, with high cheekbones, that seemed coming through the skin.

"What is that, Betsy?" asked Mrs. Percy, sternly.

"Cigars, ma'am, for master," answered Betsy, with a pleased look.

"Cigars!" echoed her mistress in a voice of thunder, and the red coming again upon her cheeks. "And pray, how dare you bring them here without my orders?"

"I only wanted six," suggested Mr. Percy Linklater meekly, with an imploring look at Betsy.

"I know that, sir, but I have brought you a whole box," answered Betsy with a sly glance at Mrs. Percy, whom she detested. She did not like Mr. Percy much better, but she generally took part with him by way of vexing his wife.

"Then you will please to take it back again!" vociferated Mrs. Percy, her round eyes sparkling with rage, "and know your place better another time. I will have nothing at all done in this house but what I order. If you choose to get whole boxes of cigars you can, but you may pay for them yourself!"

"There is no paying at all wanting. If there was I should not have brought the box here," said Betsy sharply, with an emphasis on the last word that made the cheeks of Mrs. Percy wax redder and redder.

"Betsy, what do you mean?" asked the agitated husband, whose grey eyes were now gleaming like those of a cat, so excited was he between hope and fear.

"I mean what I say, that the cigars are for you, sir—that there is nothing to pay, for the whole box is a present to you," answered Betsy good-naturedly, and taking up the box to show him that it was directed to him.

"A present! Bless my conscience! And from whom?" cried the startled man.

"From Miss White, sir," was the reply.

"What? Belinda White!" he exclaimed, scarcely daring to trust his ears.

"Yes, sir! Miss White of the Hermitage. She came into the shop while I was trying to persuade Mr. Swan to open the box. It was

the last that he had, and he didn't like to open it for so small a number as six; so, when Miss White heard that, she said she would take the whole box and make you a present of it; that she knew you were so fond of cigars, and had long meant to send you a box."

"What a darling woman!—now that's a woman I call a regular duck!" exclaimed the delighted man, seizing upon the box and beginning to open it, for once without asking his wife's leave.

"Quite the action of a lady!" observed Mrs. Percy Linklater, drawing herself up with dignity, and thinking with delight of the few farthings per week that this timely present would save her. Of course she would now stop the allowance of six.

"Yes, ma'am, Miss White is the lady, and always was such," replied Betsy as she flounced about the room, and put the chairs in their places, preparatory to the frugal meal she was obliged to call "dinner."

"I had a cousin lived as housemaid there, and she always gave Miss White the highest of characters; and such a good house as she keeps too, as regular as a clock in every thing—plenty of meat for dinner, and supper too, and a fine allowance of beer twice a day. There isn't a better kept house nowhere;" and Betsy, having finished her arrangements and her speech together, strode out of the room, and retired to her own hard work and starvation in the kitchen.

"My dear Percy, I congratulate you!" said Mrs. Percy in her softest accent, and coming up to look at the nicely packed cigars ranged in their case, in which her husband, who had just raised the lid, was now gazing fondly.

"That Belinda White *is* a regular trump!" was the enthusiastic reply; "and yet you abused her at first. I told you what she was."

"Remember, you would never have known her only for me," observed Mrs. Percy, who had originally forced herself upon Belinda White's

acquaintance, by running after her with an umbrella in a shower of rain, and thereby sacrificing her own bonnet.

"And you would never have known her only for my umbrella. Ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed Mr. Percy Linklater, excited to unusual hilarity by the sight of his cigars, and then he added in a more solemn tone—

"But you are a clever woman, Mrs. P.,—a very clever woman! I always said so. And now, as it is nearly dark, I think I may go and smoke a cigar before the door. No one will see my shirt and stockings. Good-bye, Mrs. P., for a little while. You are a monstrous clever woman, and I only hope all your introductions will turn out as profitable! Good-bye, my own love; I am sure I don't know what I should do without you."


"Nor I, my dear Percy! You know I only live to watch over *your* interests and welfare," was the affectionate reply of his wife, and she looked tenderly at him as he moved towards

the door, biting off the end of a cigar. And it was true—true on both sides, in spite of the discrepancy in appearances with which their conversation might have impressed a stranger.

These worthies had long ago found out, that they could not do without each other. Mr. Percy Linklater, who had been apprenticed to a tailor, had not one farthing except what he could wring from his wife, who had been left a small annuity by her father, a tallow-chandler; and she, having just sufficient acuteness to discover that she had no talent of her own whereby to stand alone, soon saw that her only means of rising in life must be through her husband. Self-interest, therefore, was the only bond of union existing between them, and, hating each other cordially, they still went hand in hand together.

CHAPTER XII.

THE long-expected day, when the breakfast at the Hermitage was to enliven the somewhat monotonous existence of the inhabitants of Whittington, had at last arrived. It had been deemed advisable to wait for the full moon, as many people were afraid of driving home in the dark. This had been the cause of some delay, and given more time to Belinda to complete all her little arrangements than she had at first dared to hope; for Lady Alice, who was the prime arranger of every thing, had urged the necessity of only giving four-and-twenty hours' notice of the *fête*. This was partly to prevent people expecting too much, and partly the anxiety of Alice to have a little dancing and amusement, which her gay and unaffected nature always led her to enjoy.



Such rapid movements, however, did not at all suit Belinda White, a dear old-fashioned body, who could not bear to be hurried lest she might forget something, or leave out somebody who ought to be asked, and thereby inflict pain or disappointment unwittingly. So, in spite of the impatience of Alice, she "took her time," and every thing was done properly and in order. And many a tear of heartfelt delight and gratitude did the good Belinda wipe from her eyes, as, day after day, while her little preparations were in progress, fresh proofs of the love and estimation of her neighbours and friends were added to the many she had already received. Innumerable presents poured in upon her from every side—venison, and wine, and the most beautiful confectionery came in abundance from the great houses, Atherston and Winton Park; while the more humble gladly contributed all the finest flowers, fruit, and vegetables they could command, till the supply became so enormous,

that the whole community of Whittington could not have consumed it in a week.

It was not for the value of the things that Belinda felt all this so keenly; it was the touching impression that she was cared for by all; she who loved every body, even to a fault, almost wondered to find herself so loved, and actually wept when forced to believe it. Her tears, however, were soon dried; they were tears of happiness, and could not have spoiled the brightest eyes. They were very soon followed by a smile when she looked at her last present. It was a beautiful French white silk bonnet, which Alice insisted on her wearing, because she said she was tired of "those old eternal sweet peas;" and, though Belinda had an utter aversion to finery, she certainly did look pleased when she tried on the new white bonnet, and saw the lovely tea rose just peeping over the edge. She was not proof against the improvement it made in her appearance, and she really looked

very comely and pleasant when she was dressed, and, though rather large, was not far from being almost a handsome woman.

Nothing could be prettier than the arrangement of the house and the pleasure-ground. There were flags, and tents, and seats for every body, dotted about under the beautiful cedar-trees, and in the shady nooks and corners; the only level space in the centre was kept for dancing, and, having been freshly mown, was smooth as a green velvet carpet. Myriads of flowers bloomed every where, and all looked as gay and smiling as Belinda herself; who, attended by Alice, was trotting about every where, seeing that the band was in its proper place, and every thing in order. There was no fault to be found with any of the arrangements; and, as people in the country are tolerably punctual, no sooner had four o'clock sounded from the spire of the village church, than the company began to arrive, and Belinda soon beheld her little garden so nearly filled with

ladies in their bright dresses, that it looked like a great bed of flowers. Every body was there; for Belinda would not hear of leaving out a single acquaintance.

Lord and Lady Glanberris had come early; but Alice was so taken up with arranging the dancing and amusing herself, that she had not even once met the lynx eyes of Mrs. Percy Linklater, though they were most perseveringly fixed upon her: since the first minute of her arrival they had not once left her. The hours, however, wore on, and not the slightest notice had been bestowed by the young lady upon her persecutor. The agony this unfortunate individual was all this time inflicting upon herself, was not to be told. To carry out her plans required a combination of circumstances which she found it very difficult to command. She must first of all be recognized and acknowledged by the meteor-like Alice, who never seemed to be in the same spot two minutes together. Her next care

must be to keep her husband by her side, without which no introduction could take place; and the third difficulty would be finding Lord and Lady Glanberris disengaged, exactly at the proper moment. This certainly appeared the most difficult point; for they were generally sitting down, surrounded by people.

Once indeed Mrs. Percy had ventured to try what she could do alone, and had stood for a quarter of an hour close to Lord Glanberris, though the branch of an arbutus-tree was spoiling her bonnet all the time; but she received no other token of recognition than a bow, so stately and cold in its civility that even she was forced soon to retreat, and she found she must seek the support of her little Percy if she hoped to advance in her schemes. This was, however, the most unmanageable part of the affair.

Mr. Percy Linklater had found out that there was plenty of champagne at the refreshment table, and his constant visits there were beginning to tell. He heartily wished himself out

of all the fine company, and away among the carriages, talking to the coachmen ; which was his usual employment at parties, as he fancied himself very knowing about horses. Instead of gliding about like the shadow of his wife, as he had done at first, he was growing independent, and talked boldly of going into the lane "to smoke his cigar," in a manner that considerably heightened the bloom upon Mrs. Percy Linklater's cheeks.

She began devoutly to wish that Belinda White had kept her present to herself, at all events until after the breakfast ; for ever since he had possessed that whole box of cigars he had actually broken loose. To get them into her keeping, and administer them in her usual homœopathic doses, was her firm determination. In the mean time she must temporize, and keep him in good-humour, and above all in employment. Why should she not make him dance ? He had learned at Boulogne, and she knew could acquit himself very tolerably.

She looked round for some disengaged damsel to whom she might propose the alluring pleasure of being his partner.

The three Misses Blakemore were sitting in a row under the veranda, looking black, and thin, and desolate; and Mrs. Blakemore was standing close by, with her stern eyes fixed upon the dancing, which she never allowed her daughters to join in until late in the evening. Her reason for so doing was, she said, "that they might not appear too eager to partake of so frivolous an amusement;" but, in reality, because their complexions were still more hideous when they were the least heated. This day, however, they had not been put to the test; for as there were many more ladies than gentlemen, the Misses Blakemore had not once been asked to dance. Mrs. Percy Linklater, therefore, could not have more opportunely preferred her request; and, before he actually knew what was going to happen, her obedient husband found himself standing up in a quad-

rille with Miss Martha Blakemore, a swarthy giantess, with large bones and a scanty allowance of petticoats. Mrs. Blakemore, who herself always looked as if all her clothes were clinging to her for protection, and who dreaded the expense of four *crinolines* a year, always declared, that "neither she nor her daughters would ever dress themselves out like the impudent women in hoops of the time of Louis XV." As this at once showed her modesty and her learning, it was a favourite saying of the superior lady's; but it did not render the female Blakemores more attractive; and, as he recovered his equilibrium, the face of Mr. Percy Linklater grew rather discontented as he looked upon the frightful partner selected for him. He had not, however, much time to dwell upon his misfortunes, for the bustle always attendant upon settling a quadrille in which there are too many people, was at its height, when he was actually stunned by the loud voice of his wife, close to his ear, exclaiming—

“Lady Alice, you have no *vis-à-vis*! Allow me to introduce Mr. Percy Linklater to you!”

Poor little Percy turned round as if touched by a spring, and bowed mechanically in the direction he believed he ought to bow, but he could see nothing; all he knew was, that he felt as if the earth was going backwards from under his feet, as fast as it could. Lady Alice, who was only intent upon making up her quadrille, scarcely observed who had spoken to her, and said—

“Oh, thank you! Now we can make another quadrille—here at this side. There are too many people for one. Leonora, will you come? And ask Miss Whitfield and her cousin—that will just make our four;” and, without even a look at the expectant Mrs. Percy Linklater, Lady Alice moved off to another part of the garden, followed by Miss Stratford and the other young ladies she had named. They took their places, and in a few moments the music began;

and Mrs. Percy Linklater saw that her intelligent husband took the opportunity of saying something to Lady Alice as he passed her in the mazes of the dance. A mist seemed for a moment to pass before her eyes, and she was forced to lean against one of the pillars of the veranda for support. The near approach to the climax of her hopes was quite overcoming, and very soon she also disappeared to seek some restorative for her nerves. She was, however, not the only person at Belinda White's party whose bosom was torn by contending emotions.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FULL fortnight had elapsed since the memorable day when Sir Edward Devereux had paid his visit to The Cliffs, and Leonora had not again beheld him. She had not even heard of him. Mr. Stratford had duly returned his visit; and, although her first intention had been to have accompanied her father, as she generally did in all his visits, some undefined impression had induced her to change her mind, and she had easily persuaded Mr. Stratford to call upon Sir Edward alone. This, however, except as far as her own feelings were concerned, was unproductive of any event. Sir Edward was out when Mr. Stratford arrived, and since then she had not deemed it advisable to allow him to repeat his visit. She pre-

ferred waiting to see what Sir Edward would do, or allowing their next meeting to be purely accidental.

His manner towards her, during their interview, had been so mysterious, that she, even after mature reflection, could not in the least discover the real tenor of his thoughts. At one moment he had seemed, as formerly, full of admiration and kindness towards her, while the next his words were abrupt, his voice harsh, and terror had filled her heart as she fancied that it was possible he might possess more information with regard to her secret history than he chose to avow. Delicacy might have induced him to refrain from alluding to such a subject; but frankness was a leading quality in his character, and she fancied that he would rather have confided to her all that he knew, than disclosed one half of the secret and no more. It was evident also, as she thought, that he was quite ignorant as to the contents of the box that he had delivered to her. Why, then,

was she to assume that any other information had been given him?

The awful moment at which he had received the last words and wishes of the unfortunate Marchese, precluded such a supposition. There could be no certainty of the matter now. The lips that could have bade her live in peace or exist in terror, were for ever closed; and in the fearful anxiety and constant dread which now hung over her, Leonora began to feel the first punishment for her sin. She could neither rest, nor could she enjoy the excitement of life. The pleasures of society were now to her mingled with a secret dread, from which she never could escape. It seemed to hang over her like a pall, and obscured even her brightest moments. An hysterical state of feeling was taking possession of her, and she longed for something—any thing that could restore her to repose. In all this confliction of feeling, her mind naturally turned to Sir Edward Devereux. He it was who seemed to her to hold the thread

of her destiny in his hand—it was to him she seemed in her own heart accountable for the deed that she had done ; for was it not her sin that had engendered his own, since out of it had been born the cause that led to the fatal deed he would ever have to deplore?

There had been moments when, excited almost to madness by constant fear and the strain of her own thoughts upon her mind, she had entertained the idea of confiding all to Sir Edward—of seeking his support and comfort under the harrowing circumstances in which she had placed herself, and at least securing to herself a friend, on whom her frankness might impose the restraint of silence. But these thoughts had vanished ere they had well arisen. Any ebullition of frankness or sincerity was so foreign to her nature, that the idea could find no resting-place in her mind, and she turned from it again to her schemes and her designs, endeavouring to persuade herself that the path before her was practicable, if not

smooth. Her interest, not her feelings, must be her only care. The long absence of Sir Edward Devereux had, however, filled her with a fresh alarm. She had always calculated upon the deep impression which she knew she had made upon him when first they had met in Italy. What if this favourable impression had worn off, or been supplanted by another? Her efforts would then be vain. Indifference was the worst foe she could have to combat; and it certainly did appear as if indifference had taken the place of whatever feeling had prompted him, so immediately on his return home, to seek her out. He had since then been more than a fortnight within an hour's ride of her father's house, and she had not seen him once. Day after day had she expected him; but he gave no sign of being conscious of her existence.

At last came the day appointed for the breakfast at the Hermitage; but it seemed as if disappointment and suspense were still to be her portion. She had looked forward to this

party as to a certain opportunity of seeing him again; but the day was far advanced, and yet he had not appeared. The anxiety which oppressed her from all this association of ideas, was beginning to be very painful to Leonora.

In vain she exerted herself to keep pace with the gaiety of the scene around her. The spirits of Alice seemed to her childishly troublesome, and the conversation of every one else a series of *platitudes*, that wearied her heart as well as her ear. How could the people all be so much amused with nothing? After going through a sufficient number of dances to satisfy the most zealous of her Whittington admirers, Leonora at last found a moment of escape, and, sitting down in a quiet corner of the veranda, looked listlessly before her. Uninteresting as it was to her, the scene was extremely pretty. It was growing late, and the dancers were leaving the grass to re-assemble in the house. The band was playing at a distance, and groups of people were still

seated under the trees, or loitering about the grounds.

Leonora was sitting near a small marble table, leaning her head upon her hand. She was just outside one of the windows of the drawing-room, and seemed absorbed in her own thoughts. The soft notes of a beautiful song from the "Sonnambula," extremely well played by the band, were stealing upon the air. Perhaps they awoke some recollection in the unusually stony heart of Leonora, or perhaps it was only the soothing melancholy of the air, acting upon spirits already oppressed; but certainly there was a tear trembling in the splendid eyes that rested so vacantly upon the gay scene before her. She was looking without seeing, and it was not until she heard the name of the air that had so affected her, "Ah! *perche non posso odiarti?*" softly pronounced behind her, that she seemed recalled to the realities of life. She turned hastily round, and saw it was Sir Edward Devereux who had spoken.

"I knew it was you directly, Miss Stratford," he said, holding out his hand to her, "though I could not see your face. I knew you by the turn of your head—no one could mistake that. How long have you been here? How pretty the garden looks! I never saw any thing so well done."

The friendly and unembarrassed tone in which these words were uttered, so embarrassed Leonora that they nearly took away her breath. Here was the man whom she had been holding up to herself in such a different light. What voluntary terrors she seemed to have suffered! The reaction of her thoughts was so sudden, that she could scarcely command her voice as she tried to answer Sir Edward in a tone of unconcern. He did not appear to observe it; for, bringing a chair from the drawing-room, he sat down beside her, and immediately seemed intent upon examining every body before him.

"So you have been here all day!" he ex-

claimed. "Now tell me who is here and who is not here, for I have only seen Belinda White for one moment. I came to look for you."

The heart of Leonora bounded at these words, and she gaily replied—"Every one is here that could possibly be collected—from Lady Glanberris down to Mrs. Percy Linklater; but of course you know all the world of Whittington much better than I do."

"No, I do not indeed! Recollect I have been two years away—one year in Greece and the other in Italy. New people may spring up in that time; for instance, Mrs. Percy Linklater—I never heard of her before. Who is she?"

"You must ask her that question yourself, Sir Edward," said Leonora smiling. "All I can tell you is, that she says her husband is related to Lord Glanberris, that they live in the old part of the town in a small cottage called 'Ivy Lodge,' and seem excessively poor."

"And Mr. Linklater," inquired Sir Edward, "what sort of man is he?"

"A quiet inoffensive person, I believe," was the careless reply of Leonora, who would not for the world have given the true character of any one for fear of making an enemy.

"But you, Sir Edward," she added, turning to him with a soft smile, "where have you been all the day? why did you come so late?"

"Ah! you may well ask," he replied. "I promised Belinda to be here at sunrise, and now it is nearly moonlight. The fact is, I could not get Stuart to dress himself until the last moment."

"Is your brother staying with you? I did not know he had arrived," observed Leonora, and she felt rather uncomfortable, though without knowing exactly why. Every thing connected with Sir Edward was an event to her, and she would much have preferred his remaining alone in his own house.

"Yes; he came this morning on purpose for the *fête*: he and Lord Strathearn came together; but as Stuart never goes any where without

making a most elaborate toilet, I was obliged to wait till all the luggage was unpacked. You should have seen all the boxes he brought! I am sure you do not travel with half so many, and yet nobody dresses so beautifully;" and as he spoke Sir Edward looked admiringly at his companion.

Leonora turned her head half away, until the little crape bonnet, covered with clematis, concealed the look of infinite satisfaction that lighted up her face. The tone and manner of Sir Edward were so exactly the same as they used to be, that she felt all her fears vanish, and her habitual gaiety returned.

"Is that gentleman your brother, Sir Edward?" she asked, pointing to the room inside, which was now in a blaze of light. "I do not mean the tall one, but that little man standing on this side of Belinda."


"Exactly so!" replied Sir Edward, laughing; "that little man with the white hair is the great Mr. Stuart Devereux. How quickly you

found him out! What made you think that was my brother?" he added, fixing his eyes upon her.

"Because," said Leonora, readily, "he is so like you. Not a flattering likeness, certainly!" she added, with a most enchanting smile; "but still there is a look, a family resemblance, not to be mistaken."

"She is not so false, after all," said Sir Edward to himself; for Leonora, who sometimes made the truth subservient to her purposes when it could not be avoided, thought it well to purchase a character for frankness at so cheap a rate. Sir Edward Devereux, she well knew, had not the least tinge of personal vanity.

"And that other man," he continued, still following the direction of her eye, "is Lord Strathearn, one of the great stars of the fashionable world just now. He is enormously rich, and people think him uncommonly handsome. What is your opinion, Miss Stratford?"



.


“Well, I should say, the world was right,” said the ingenuous young lady; “I think Lord Strathearn decidedly handsome. Tall, and dark, and sentimental-looking, he looks like a poet—at least what one fancies a poet should look like,” and she smiled with a childish air; while Sir Edward remarked, as he had done a thousand times before, the extraordinary beauty of her lips and teeth. Just then the first notes of a waltz were heard, and the room began instantly to fill.

“Will you waltz, Miss Stratford?” asked Sir Edward, suddenly getting up, as if to dispel some thought which had just entered his head. “I did not mean to dance, but I cannot resist the wish I have to dance with you once again. Will you not come?” and he held out his arm to her and led her into the room, where they took their places immediately.

Leonora danced as well as she did every thing else she undertook, and her light and simple dress became her extremely. She

looked dazzlingly beautiful, but perfectly unconscious of, and uncaring for, the effect she produced. And yet her eye had instantly taken in the expression of every countenance in the room; and she saw, all the time she was dancing, that both Lord Strathearn and Mr. Devereux were almost struck dumb with admiration and surprise, and had never withdrawn their steadfast gaze from her face, from the moment that she had entered the room.

Accustomed as she was to involuntary homage, at this moment it was peculiarly exhilarating, and her spirits rose to the vivacity of those of a child; she talked, and laughed, and floated round the room with the lightest step of joy—she who but an hour before had felt that she could never be happy again! As soon as the waltz was over, Sir Edward proposed a walk in the garden, and they wandered round and round the flower-beds for a considerable time, until the chillness of the evening became very apparent to Leonora, who had only a



muslin gown to protect her neck and shoulders from the cold.

"I think," she said with a slight shiver, "that it would be pleasanter inside the house: the moon is very beautiful, but it is growing quite cold here. How much I miss the delicious evenings we used to have in Italy! Do you not also, Sir Edward? Though, upon the whole, I like England and English people much the best. I don't think I should have liked to live always in Italy. Should you?"


She put her arm through his as she turned towards the house; but she did not observe the start with which her words had been received by her companion. A dark cloud seemed to come over his face, and he bent his eyes searchingly upon hers, as though trying to read her thoughts. She did not seem to be thinking of any thing just then except untying her handkerchief, which she had put round her throat when she came into the air after dancing.

"Is this innocence, or is it indifference, or the most consummate hypocrisy?" he said to himself, as he heard her careless allusion to a land, the very name of which stirred up such sorrow in his heart.

"Perhaps," he replied, feeling that some answer was necessary, "there was no one happy enough in Italy to make you prefer it to all other places. It is a splendid and a delicious country in itself; but I have always thought it was people who attached one to a place, not the place itself alone, much as one might admire it. Do you not think so, Miss Stratford?"

"Decidedly!" replied Leonora, as if only in answer to his last words; "and that is the reason why I said I preferred England as my home."

Sir Edward quickly perceived the evasion, and steadily continued, "Well, I must say, Miss Stratford, I am proud to hear you like our honest English ways the best. Most young ladies rave about Italy, and the charms of foreign society; but you, I see, have better taste. You



can tolerate our stiff manners and loose gloves in favour of our true hearts. Is it not so?" He laughed as he spoke, but his eyes never for a moment left the face of Leonora, who calmly answered—

"Yes; it is certainly a great happiness to find one's-self among people one can trust and believe."

"And you never found that abroad, Miss Stratford?" instantly asked Sir Edward, and with an emphasis that, to the conscience-stricken Leonora, seemed very intelligible. She did not, however, lose her presence of mind, and simply returned for answer the one word, "Never," looking up as she did so with the most perfect air of confiding sincerity. Sir Edward longed to press to his heart the little hand that was leaning upon his arm; for that one word seemed to have lightened his heart of a load; but he restrained himself, and, in the hope of somewhat generalizing the subject, he answered carelessly—

“Well, I must say, Miss Stratford, the ladies and gentlemen of your foreign acquaintance need not be very much obliged to you. You are rather hard upon them, though I cannot call you unjust. And so you are perfectly satisfied with Whittington—poor little Whittington—after all the gaieties of Florence?”

“Perfectly!” replied Leonora, in the same natural tone in which she had before spoken; and Sir Edward felt his doubts of her sincerity growing every moment weaker and weaker. They had reached the open window of the drawing-room just at this moment, and were going in, when, apparently from behind one of the curtains, the stumpy figure of Mrs. Percy Linklater glided forth. Poor woman! she had been running from one window to another, watching to see by which Leonora would re-enter the house, until even her patience was nearly exhausted.

“Miss Stratford!” she exclaimed hurriedly, as if she was out of breath after her long

search, "I have been looking for you every where. Lady Alice wants you to make up another quadrille for her by and by. Almost all the dancing young ladies have been carried off by their mamas, for fear of the night air."

"And so I am to do double duty, I suppose?" said Leonora, gaily. "Where is Alice, and where is my father? Have you seen him? I hope he has not gone home alone."

"Mr. Stratford is in the *boudoir*. He and Lord Glanberris have just made up a rubber of whist with two other gentlemen," replied Mrs. Percy, who had never lost sight of any of the family for a moment. Her heart ached with innumerable disappointments; but hitherto it had been impossible for her to seize upon the volatile Alice for a moment. Her time, however, was growing short, and no opportunity must be neglected. "Can I take any message for you to Mr. Stratford?" she asked, for she longed to be obliged to approach the whist table. "Lady Alice is quite at the other end

of the garden, in the large tent. It is so beautifully lighted up. Have you not seen it?"

"No, not yet!" replied Leonora; "shall we go there, Sir Edward? The whist party will not be half over when we come back."

"By all means," was the ready reply; "whereabouts is the tent?"

"Oh! I will show you. Let me show you the way!" cried Mrs. Percy Linklater with alacrity; "but," she added, with a gentle timidity of manner well assumed, "I ought to ask to be presented to Sir Edward Devereux. Miss Stratford, will you have the kindness?"

Leonora, with the slightest possible curl of her pretty lip, did as she was asked, and Sir Edward acknowledged the civility of Mrs. Percy with a bow of unrivalled grace.

Poor Sir Edward! He could not imagine at that moment what an infinity of trouble that bow might cost him.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Leonora and her companions arrived at the tent, which had been arranged for dancing at the opposite side of the garden in order to avoid crowding the house, she found Alice just coming to look for her. With a joyous step she advanced to meet them, and, having shaken hands with Sir Edward, she said to Leonora—

“I really thought you would never come, Leonora! I sent half a dozen people to look for you. Where can you have been all this time?”

“Not very far off, Alice; but I suppose your messengers found more agreeable occupation by the way than looking for me. No one except Mrs. Percy told me that you wanted me.”

“And she was just the person I did not

send," whispered Alice, as they passed round one of the pillars that, entwined with evergreens, supported an extremely pretty half-open tent; then she added aloud—"It was very wrong of you to stay away so long. Lord Strathearn and Mr. Devereux have been tormenting me this last hour to present them to you. You know they are strangers in the land, and know nobody here."

"I should have thought Mr. Devereux at least knew everybody," observed Leonora, turning to Sir Edward.

"I think not," he answered. "He has not been here for the last five or six years; and even the society of Whittington may fluctuate in so long a time. And, besides," he added laughing, "you don't understand Stuart yet. He is such an ultra exclusive, that I consider myself very lucky that he condescends even to know me."

Mrs. Percy Linklater, who had crept round to the side of Alice in the hope of including

herself in the general introduction, as suddenly retreated to that of Sir Edward as she heard these words. He was evidently not the least exclusive. She had better stick to him.

"I hate exclusives," observed Leonora, bluntly.

"I never could find out what the word meant, or the people either," said Alice, gaily.

"You were not likely to do so, my dear Lady Alice," said Sir Edward in his good-natured manner, as if he was speaking to a child.

"Oh! I don't want to find out either that or any thing else that takes up my time disagreeably. There are so many pleasant things in the world," said Alice, without even looking at him, and then, as they had penetrated the little knot of people who always insist on taking the place of a door every where, she added—

"There is mama, Alice, do come to her! She will arrange another quadrille for us." Lady Glanberris was sitting on a low sofa at the end

of the tent, with Lord Strathearn by her side, and surrounded by several people. Lord Strathearn, a handsome but rather discontented-looking man, rose from his place as Leonora approached, and civilly offered it to her. Leonora, who would much rather have prolonged her conversation with Sir Edward, who seemed very rapidly falling in love with her again, was obliged to accept it, and, relinquishing his arm, she sat down by Lady Glanberris, who instantly presented the two strangers to her. They had evidently been waiting for the opportunity, and so completely engrossed her attention that she could not again find a moment to speak to Sir Edward, who was now devoting himself to the lively Alice.

Mrs. Percy Linklater, finding that it was impossible to get any one to talk to her, made her way back to the house, to see what her husband was doing. Dancing had recommenced in the tent, and Leonora was immediately asked to dance by both of her new acquaint-

ances. They were very different from each other; but, as neither of them concealed the admiration with which they were filled, the self-love of the beautiful Leonora was sufficiently gratified. She saw also that Sir Edward remarked their attentions to her, and this certainty filled her with delight. Brighter visions than she had had lately, seemed rising before her. The *fête*, that had begun so heavily for her, had now become delightful. She could not bear to think it was so nearly at an end.

She was enjoying herself excessively, and her spirits were very nearly as high as those of Alice. All in a moment a shadow fell upon the brightness of her dream. She was dancing with Lord Strathearn for the second time; for, not satisfied with his first quadrille, he had asked her to waltz. In one of the pauses of the dance he suddenly said—

“Miss Stratford, you said just now that you had never seen me before?”

“Well, and was it not true, Lord Strathearn?”

I certainly never remember having seen you before; and I don't think, if I had done so, I should have so completely forgotten it," she answered, with great apparent *naïveté*.

"Well, then, I have been more fortunate than you," he replied laughing; "for I saw you long ago—nearly two years ago; and, though it was only by moonlight that I saw you, I remembered you again directly. I knew you the very moment that you came into the room."

An unaccountable feeling of dislike towards the speaker immediately entered the heart of Leonora as Lord Strathearn pronounced these words. She took care, however, not to betray it, but merely replied—

"It is very possible, Lord Strathearn; I have been about the world so much."

"I thought you always lived in Italy until now," he observed, in rather a surprised tone.

"I have been a good deal there," was the laconic reply.

"But I thought you had absolutely lived at

Florence—that Mr. Stratford had a house there,” persisted Lord Strathearn.

“What a tiresome matter-of-fact animal!” thought Leonora privately; but she only answered with a careless manner.

“Yes, he had one once; but what has that to do with our having met before?”

“Oh! a great deal, Miss Stratford! because it was at Florence that I first saw you. I was sure that I was right; certain that I could not be mistaken! I am so glad: it is so disagreeable to make a mistake! Don’t you think so?”

“Very; but still it is possible, and very pardonable, I think,” she replied, with a good-natured smile.

“Well, I don’t think I should forgive being taken for another person, if I was a young lady; though I can imagine other young ladies being excessively flattered by being taken for you, Miss Stratford,” he answered, with a very expressive look of admiration. “But,”

he continued, seeing that Leonora did not reply, "are you not the least curious, for I dare not say interested, to know where it was that I first saw you?"


"You said it was by moonlight, and at Florence; so I have no longer any ground for curiosity, seeing that I know all about it," replied the young lady in a bantering tone, but disliking her companion more and more every moment.

"No; you don't, indeed, Miss Stratford! There is a great deal more than that," he said, with a very mysterious air.

"Well, then, tell it to me, if there is," she answered, rather sharply; and then, as if afraid her manner might have betrayed more anxiety than she cared to show, she added gaily—

"You are making me grow quite curious, Lord Strathearn; so, pray, tell me this wonderful secret."

"Yes; if you will just waltz once more round with me, I will."



Leonora complied ; and then Lord Strathearn resumed the conversation, and, with a look of gravity that made her feel suddenly chilled, he said, "I dare say you will think I am very indiscreet ; but I never could help wondering what you had been doing that night that I saw you at Florence. I have thought of it so often ! You looked more like an angel than a woman. I always longed to know what you had been doing."

Leonora started, her heart beat quickly, and she rather hurriedly answered, "Why, what could I have been doing, more than other people?"

"A great deal, I should think, Miss Stratford!" he said with a smile. "At all events, you did more in that one minute to me than other woman had ever effected. You impressed your image so indelibly upon my heart, that I never forgot you: you have literally haunted me ever since."

"Good heavens! I shall begin to think I am turned into a spectre if you speak so seriously

about it, Lord Strathearn; so mind and don't be frightened if it really happens, and I should walk through that stream of moonlight without casting a shadow on the grass;" and, as she spoke, she playfully pointed to the sloping bank that was visible through the front of the tent.

"I should not like it at all," said Lord Strathearn, very frankly; "such beauty as yours should not be too ethereal, or we mortals must be too wretched on the earth. But," he added, in a lighter tone, "do let me see once more how you look by moonlight! It would be such a pleasure to me—like the realization of a dream. Do, Miss Stratford, if you are not tired, just walk across the garden with me?"

Leonora, who had a peculiar talent in that way, just gave one of her sweeping, stealthy looks all round the assemblage of persons then in the tent. She saw that Sir Edward Devereux was quietly sitting down upon the low sofa at the far end, between Lady Glanberris and Alice. There did not appear the least danger of his

moving, and it was not possible, from the spot where he sat, for him to see into the garden. Having just, as she imagined, completed a very successful moonlight walk with him, she did not wish him particularly to behold her going through exactly the same ceremony with another. She, therefore, thought she might venture; and, taking the arm of Lord Strathearn, she said, "Well, if it is only for a moment, I have no objection; but I am rather afraid of staying long in the air after so much dancing."

"I little thought," said Lord Strathearn, as if he was talking to himself, "that this day would ever come;" and then, as they stepped from the shadow into the broad band of silver which the moon threw upon the grass, he turned and looked full in the face of his companion. "That is it!" he exclaimed; "that is exactly the look your face wore the night I saw you! A sort of anxious, half-frightened look—like a startled deer—such a beautiful look. It is ex-

actly the same now, only your dress is different. You wore black then—you were all in black; but you put your veil up just as you came near me.”

“What a good memory you seem to have, Lord Strathearn!” observed Leonora, who did not dare to ask him any questions.

“Oh, yes! There are some things I never have forgotten, and that is one of them—the moment that I first saw you, I remember it as if it had been yesterday. I was standing in an arched doorway, waiting for a friend of mine who was travelling with me; he had gone up-stairs for a letter he had forgotten. At that moment you came out of a church close by, you looked up and down the street, as if you had lost your way; and then it was you put up your veil, and that I saw your face.

“Well, and what did I do afterwards? said Leonora, trying to laugh, though a feeling of ice was gathering round her heart. “Did I find my way at last?”

"It seemed so, for you walked on very fast, until you came to a sort of garden with high iron railings. I suppose it was your own house, for you opened the gate with a key and went in, so I could see no more." The heart of Leonora seemed to stand still at these words. How accurately the spot had been described, her terrified senses could tell! She could scarcely breathe; but in a few moments found strength to say, though in a very constrained voice—

"And you never came again to see after this wonderful vision?" she tried to utter these words in a jocular tone, though she felt hardly able to stand.

"I never could find the house again," replied Lord Strathearn simply; "there were arms, too, over the gate that I thought I should have recognised, but, as I had never been in Florence before, I completely lost my way among the streets. I found out, however, who you were, the next day by describing your

face, and then I heard a great deal about you; so you see, Miss Stratford, I know infinitely more of you than you think." This last remark, though so carelessly made, struck Leonora to the heart. She felt such a sudden revulsion of feeling, from the joyous lightness of the last hour to the nervous anxiety of the present, that a sudden faintness came over her, and she shivered so violently that Lord Strathearn felt her hand tremble upon his arm, and he hastily exclaimed—

"You are cold, Miss Stratford—you will be ill! How very selfish of me to make you stand in the night air!" and he moved in the direction of the tent.

"I do feel rather chilly after dancing," replied Leonora, gladly accepting the offered excuse; and then, as her quick eye perceived the figure of Sir Edward Devereux, though his back was turned towards them, she added, "Suppose we go into the house, it will be warmer than the tent." She did not desire to meet

Sir Edward until her usual self-possession was a little more restored; and she also wished, if possible, to discover whether Lord Strathearn knew any thing more of her than he had told her. There was a mystery in his looks and manner which she could not exactly explain to herself. Stranger as he was, the same sort of impression had seized upon her now, with regard to her new companion, as the presence of Sir Edward had until the last hour always conveyed. She felt afraid of him already; and when she considered that they were actually living in the same house, and that they would have abundant opportunities of talking of her together, when she could not possibly discover what had been the tenor of their conversation, she felt a very great increase of annoyance and alarm.

The evening, however, was not yet over, and she trusted some opportunity would still present itself for obtaining the information she so much desired. After having, however, waited a con-

siderable time, she began to despair of success, and resolved to make for herself that which chance did not seem disposed to offer her; she, therefore, boldly asked the question—

“How long did you stay in Florence, Lord Strathearn, after the day on which you say you saw me there?”

“Long enough, Miss Stratford, to hear a great deal about you, and to give me some idea of the very dangerous person I should encounter if ever I had the happiness to meet you again,” was the very unsatisfactory reply.

“If you had stayed much longer we must have met,” she observed quietly; “the society there is on so much more confined a scale than in England, that every body knows every body in a moment.”

“And every body’s secret history—their very thoughts, I believe,” answered Lord Strathearn, with the same mysterious expression which had so much alarmed Leonora.

“I must have been coming from chapel when



you saw me," she said, as from nervous excitement she felt as if forced to rush to the subject she wanted to avoid—"I often used to go to the evening services."

"But you are not a Roman Catholic, Miss Stratford?"

"Oh, no ! certainly not; but the music is so beautiful in the churches in Italy, that I never could resist going."

"I only went to one while I was at Florence—the one I saw you come out of; but you never came there again. After all, I was only two days in the town, so I had not much time to visit every thing."

The smile and look of relief with which these words were received by his hearer, might have given Lord Strathearn a suspicion that the subject on which they had been talking was not one of quite so much indifference as the assumed gaiety of her manner would have made him believe; but he had not time to consider the matter very closely at that instant,

for, as they entered the house, they were stopped by Belinda White coming from her boudoir, and her first words dispelled all his ideas of romance: "Lord Strathearn," she said, "can you play at whist? I am certain you can play at whist."

"No, that I certainly cannot," he replied, laughing; "whist was entirely left out of my education. It was shameful neglect, but it is a fact."

"I am not so sure of that," said Belinda good-humouredly; "at all events, you are much better employed just now. I must look for some one of more mature age to make up Lord Glanberris's rubber; one of his party has just left him."

So saying, Belinda White bustled away to the other end of the room, which was still quite full of people. No sooner had she disappeared, than the short figure of Mrs. Percy Linklater might have been seen darting down one walk and then up another, until she came to a little back-door of the pleasure-

ground opening into the lane. Immediately outside it, sat Mr. Percy Linklater on a broken white post, smoking his cigar, and in full conversation with the drivers of the attendant flies.

"Now is your time!" whispered the industrious little lady to her husband, seizing him at the same time by the arm; "Lord Glanberris wants a fourth at whist. They won't be particular now it's so late: come in and offer yourself;" and she dragged rather than led him along the walk towards the house.

"Bless my soul! I am not to play at whist with the great man, am I?" he asked in a tone of alarm.

"Why, of course, you idiot of a man!" replied his gentle wife; "it may be the making of you. Play as well as you can if you are his partner, and, above all, *hold your tongue*. Remember I insist upon it!" and the frown with which these words were accompanied showed how very much the speaker was in earnest.

"And who is to pay if I lose?" exclaimed Mr. Percy, very sulkily; for he knew, if he won, all his winnings would be taken from him to pay the weekly bills.

"We lose!" exclaimed Mrs. Percy Linklater, in a tone that would have done honour to Lady Macbeth, only it was a little subdued.

"I dare say I shall, though," muttered her unhappy husband, terrified out of his senses at the thoughts of playing at whist with an earl, and walking as slowly as he could. "And my hands are so dirty, I shall never be able to deal. I took off my gloves two hours ago, to keep them clean for the next party. It is so disagreeable only to have one pair!"

All this was said in an under tone as he was hurried along the dark walk; but, in spite of his lingerings and mutterings, his indefatigable wife contrived to push him through the crowd just as she saw the head of Belinda White re-appearing at the other end of the room; and, in spite of the frigid looks of Lord Glanberris,

she also contrived to seat him at the whist table, Mr. Stratford having kindly accepted him as a partner; and then Mrs. Percy Linklater, with a pleasant sensation of triumph, stood for some time behind his chair pretending to look at the game. It was not the most difficult of those that had been played that evening.

END OF VOL. I.



March, 1856.

A CATALOGUE
OF
NEW AND STANDARD WORKS,

PUBLISHED BY
SMITH, ELDER AND CO.,
65, CORNHILL, LONDON.

New Works Just Ready.

I.
SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

By THE CHEVALIER BUNSEN.

Translated from the German, with the author's sanction, by
MISS SUSANNA WINKWORTH,

Author of "The Life of Niebuhr," and translator of "Theologia Germanica."
One Volume, 8vo.

II.
THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF
SIR JOHN MALCOLM, G.C.B.

By JOHN WILLIAM KAYE, Esq.

Two Volumes, 8vo.

III.
THE CHINESE AND THEIR REBELLIONS,
Viewed in connection with their Philosophy, Ethics, Legislation,
and Administrative Forms.

By THOMAS TAYLOR MEADOWS, Esq.

One Volume, 8vo, with Maps.

IV.
THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

By ALEXANDER ROSS,

Author of "Fur-Hunters of the Far West."

One Volume, post 8vo.

Just Published.

I.

THE POLITICAL LIFE OF SIR R. PEEL.

By THOMAS DOUBLEDAY,

Author of the "Financial History of England," "The True Law of Population," &c.

Two Volumes, 8vo, price 30s. cloth.

II.

THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1848.

By EDWARD CAYLEY, Esq.

Two Volumes, Crown 8vo, price 18s. cloth.

III.

TWO SUMMER CRUISES WITH THE BALTIC FLEET IN 1854-5;

BEING THE LOG OF THE "PET."

By R. E. HUGHES, M.A.

Second Edit., Post 8vo, with Views and Charts. 10s. 6d., cloth.

"There are few readers to whom this volume will not be welcome. It is light and pleasant reading, and conveys not a little valuable information. Few unprofessional men are so capable of forming a judgment on naval tactics as Mr. Hughes appears to be."—*Economist*.

"The stamp of veracity is on every sentence of this book—not only the intention to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, but the capacity of perceiving facts and not falsehoods."—*Spectator*.

"A smart, lively, interesting book, the perusal of which may cause many a smile, while it conveys a vast amount of information in the most unpretending and agreeable style."—*Observer*.

"The volume must prove interesting to many, containing as it does an epitome of our two naval campaigns in the Baltic."—*Saturday Review*.

"Mr. Hughes tells us at first hand of Bomarsund and Sveaborg. He sketches sea and coast life, and appears to be a man whose attainments fit him for the business."—*Athenæum*.

IV.

A CAMPAIGN WITH THE TURKS IN ASIA.

By CHARLES DUNCAN, Esq.

Two Volumes, Post 8vo, price 21s., cloth.

"These volumes contain an account of a winter residence at Erzeroum, a sojourn with the Turkish army at Kars, including the campaign of 1854, and journeys to and from Constantinople via Trebizond. The novelty of the scenes and characters, the picturesque sketches of the Turkish army, and the solid information which is scattered through the book, render the volumes of present interest and of importance as a future record."—*Spectator*.

"We heartily recommend to every reader a careful perusal of these two excellent volumes. Mr. Duncan's book may be accepted as a faithful and spirited history, a highly interesting journal of travel, and an exciting narrative."—*Economist*.

"These volumes are delightful as a book of travels, but they possess a much higher interest as describing the circumstances of the war in Asia."—*Standard*.

Works of Mr. Ruskin.

I.

THE THIRD VOLUME OF MODERN PAINTERS.

By JOHN RUSKIN, Esq.,

Author of "Seven Lamps of Architecture," "Stones of Venice," &c.

*With Eighteen Illustrations drawn by the Author, and
engraved on Steel, price 38s. cloth.*

"All men who think for themselves, or who have even wished to think for themselves, on matters of Art and Literature, owe Mr. Ruskin a great debt of gratitude for valuable teaching and hearty encouragement. A writer who has brought long and arduous study, literary ability of the highest order, earnestness, courage, and extraordinary originality of view, to the service of criticism on art in this country, has deserved well of his readers, and has acquired very strong claims to their admiration and regard. * * * The present volume, viewed as a literary achievement, is the highest and most striking evidence of the author's abilities that has yet been published. It shows the maturity of his powers of thought, and the perfection of his grace of style."—*Leader*.

"Mr. Ruskin's third volume of 'Modern Painters' will be hailed with interest and curiosity, if not with submissive attention, by the Art-world of England. * * * Mr. Ruskin is in possession of a clear and penetrating mind; he is undeniably practical in his fundamental ideas; full of the deepest reverence for all that appears to him beautiful and holy, and, though owing to very strong preferences, founding those preferences on reason. * * * His style is, as usual, clear, bold, and racy. Mr. Ruskin is one of the first writers of the day."—*Economist*.

* * The FOURTH Volume is just ready.

II.

MODERN PAINTERS.

Imperial 8vo. Vol. I. Fifth Edition, 18s. cloth.

Vol. II. Fourth Edition, 10s. 6d. cloth.

"Mr. Ruskin's work will send the painter more than ever to the study of nature; will train men who have always been delighted spectators of nature, to be also attentive observers. Our critics will learn to admire, and mere admirers will learn how to criticise: thus a public will be educated."—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

"A generous and impassioned review of the works of living painters. A hearty and earnest work, full of deep thought, and developing great and striking truths in art."—*British Quarterly Review*.

"A very extraordinary and delightful book, full of truth and goodness, of power and beauty."—*North British Review*.

"One of the most remarkable works on art which has appeared in our time."—*Edinburgh Review*.

III.

THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE.

Second Edition, with Fourteen Plates drawn by the Author.

Imperial 8vo, 1l. 1s. cloth.

"By the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture,' we understand Mr. Ruskin to mean the seven fundamental and cardinal laws, the observance of and obedience to which are indispensable to the architect, who would deserve the name. The politician, the moralist, the divine, will find in it ample store of instructive matter, as well as the artist."—*Examiner*.

"From the series of works upon which Mr. Ruskin is engaged, we can scarcely hope too much for art. The brilliant manner by which the present and other works of Mr. Ruskin are adorned has placed them at once amongst the books that *must* be read. The views broached in this volume constitute the most significant piece of criticism which has appeared in the English language for very many years."—*North British Review*.

"Mr. Ruskin's book bears so unmistakeably the marks of keen and accurate observation, of a true and subtle judgment and refined sense of beauty, joined with so much earnestness, so noble a sense of the purposes and business of art, and such a command of rich and glowing language, that it cannot but tell powerfully in producing a more religious view of the uses of architecture, and a deeper insight into its artistic principles."—*Guardian*.

"A lively, poetical, and thoughtful book; rich in refined criticism and glowing eloquence. Mr. Ruskin's poetry is always to the purpose of his doctrines, and always the vehicle of acute thought and profound feeling."—*Fraser's Magazine*.

Works of Mr. Ruskin.

IV.

THE STONES OF VENICE.

Now complete in Three Volumes, Imperial 8vo, with Fifty-three Plates and numerous Woodcuts, drawn by the Author.

Price 5l. 15s. 6d., in embossed cloth, with top edge gilt.

EACH VOLUME MAY BE HAD SEPARATELY, VIZ.—

VOL. I. THE FOUNDATIONS, *with 21 Plates, price 2l. 2s.*

VOL. II. THE SEA STORIES, *with 20 Plates, price 2l. 2s.*

VOL. III. THE FALL, *with 12 Plates, price 1l. 11s. 6d.*

"This book is one which, perhaps, no other man could have written, and one for which the world ought to be and will be thankful. It is in the highest degree eloquent, acute, stimulating to thought, and fertile in suggestion. It shows a power of practical criticism which, when fixed on a definite object, nothing absurd or evil can withstand; and a power of appreciation which has restored treasures of beauty to mankind. It will, we are convinced, elevate taste and intellect, raise the tone of moral feeling, kindle benevolence towards men, and increase the love and fear of God."—*Times*.

"The 'Stones of Venice' is the production of an earnest, religious, progressive, and informed mind. The author of this essay on architecture has condensed into it a poetic apprehension, the fruit of awe of God, and delight in nature; a knowledge, love, and just estimate of art; a holding fast to fact and repudiation of hearsay; an historic breadth, and a fearless challenge of existing social problems, whose union we know not where to find paralleled."—*Spectator*.

"No one who has visited Venice can read this book without having a richer glow thrown over his remembrances of that city, and for those who have not, Mr. Ruskin paints it with a firmness of outline and vividness of colouring that will bring it before the imagination with the force of reality."—*Literary Gazette*.

"This work shows that Mr. Ruskin's powers of composition and criticism were never in greater force. His eloquence is as rich, his enthusiasm as hearty, his sympathy for all that is high and noble in art as keen as ever. The book, like all he writes, is manly and high-minded, and, as usual, keeps the attention alive to the last."—*Guardian*.

"The whole work is eloquent and thoughtful, and creative of thought in others. Mr. Ruskin invests his dissertation with deep interest, and handles every fragment with a broad grasp. This book is a noble innovation upon the old dead talk of architects and amateurs in architecture."—*Examiner*.

"No one who has studied art in Venice will go through this book without such pleasure as belongs to a revival of some of his warmest admirations, and the refreshment of his most delicious associations. This work is full of fine things, and of true things."—*Athenæum*.

"The reputation which Mr. Ruskin has earned by his former works will probably receive a great accession of lustre from the 'Stones of Venice.' This work may be justly described as his most valuable performance, and fitted to become the most popular of all his productions."—*British Quarterly Review*.

V.

LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING.

With Fourteen Cuts drawn by the Author. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, price 8s. 6d. cloth.

"Mr. Ruskin's Lectures—eloquent, graphic, and impassioned—exposing and ridiculing some of the vices of our present system of building, and exciting his hearers by strong motives of duty and pleasure to attend to architecture—are very successful; and, like his former works, will command public attention. His style is terse, vigorous, and sparkling, and his book is both animated and attractive."—*Economist*.

"We conceive it to be impossible that any intelligent persons could listen to the lectures, however they might differ from the judgments asserted, and from the general propositions laid down, without an elevating influence and an aroused enthusiasm, which are often more fruitful in producing true taste and correct views of art than the soundest historical generalizations and the most learned technical criticism in which the heart and the senses own no interest."—*Spectator*.

Works of Mr. Ruskin.

VI.

EXAMPLES OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF
VENICE,

SELECTED AND DRAWN TO MEASUREMENT FROM THE EDIFICES.

*In Parts of Folio Imperial size, each containing Five Plates,
and a short Explanatory Text, price 1l. 1s. each.*

PARTS ONE TO THREE ARE PUBLISHED.

*Fifty India Proofs only are taken on Atlas Folio, price 2l. 2s.
each Part.*

VII.

P R E - R A P H A E L I T I S M .

8vo, 2s. sewed.

"We wish that this pamphlet might be largely read by our art-patrons, and studied by our art-critics. There is much to be collected from it which is very important to remember."—*Guardian*.

VIII.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER;
OR, THE BLACK BROTHERS.

With 22 Illustrations by RICHARD DOYLE.

2s. 6d.

"This little fairy tale is by a master hand. The story has a charming moral, and the writing is so excellent, that it would be hard to say which it will give most pleasure to, the very wise man or the very simple child."—*Examiner*.

IX.

NOTES ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF
SHEEP-FOLDS.

8vo, 1s.

"A pamphlet on the doctrine and discipline of the Church of Christ."—*Britannia*.

X.

THE OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE:

Considered in some of its relations to the Prospects of Art.

8vo, price 1s., sewed.

"An earnest and eloquent appeal for the preservation of the ancient monuments of Gothic architecture."—*English Churchman*.

"A wholesome and much needed protest."—*Leader*.

XI.

NOTES ON THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES
EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF THE
ROYAL ACADEMY, 1855.

Third Edition, with Supplement. 8vo, price 6d.

New Novels.

I.

AFTER DARK. BY WILKIE COLLINS,

Author of "Basil," "Hide and Seek," &c. 2 vols.

"A series of tales supposed to be told to a portrait-painter by his sitters; the frame-work tells us how he came to think of publishing the stories thus collected; the introductions describe the circumstances under which the tales were told. These portions have a delicate every-day interest. The tales are stories of adventure, well varied, and often striking in the incidents, or with thrilling situations; and are as pleasant reading as a novel reader could desire."—*Spectator*.

"Mr. Wilkie Collins takes high rank among the few who can invent a thrilling story, and tell it with brief simplicity. The power of commanding the faculties of his readers is exercised in nearly all these stories."—*Globe*.

"Mr. Wilkie Collins possesses a rare faculty: *l'art de conter*. No man living better tells a story. He has been happy in his choice of a thread whereon to string the pearls; we feel an independent interest in it, and read it almost as eagerly as the stories themselves."—*Leader*.

II.

AMBERHILL. BY A. J. BARROWCLIFFE. 2 vols.

"There is great power in 'Amberhill,' and its faults are forgotten in the sustained excitement of the narrative. There are in the book some of the shrewdest sketches of character we have ever met with. If we suppose the story to be the work of an artist, the leading characters to be imagined, and her whole career from first to last to be shaped by design, we must regard it as a wonderful work of creative genius."—*Press*.

"'Amberhill' is an exciting book, not belonging to any established school of novel, unless it be the defiant. There is a freshness and force, a petulant grace, and a warm-hearted satirical vein in 'Amberhill,' which will give it a charm to every *biased* novel reader. The characters are vigorously drawn and have genuine life in them."—*Globe*.

"There is talent and vigour about this work; we welcome it, in spite of the morbid and painful interest of the story. The story is told with great energy and some eloquence. If the author will cultivate her talents, she may produce something far better than 'Amberhill.'"—*Athenaeum*.

"'Amberhill' appears to be intended as a lesson against weakness of character, over-just of wealth, and disregard of religion. The writer has one great quality for fiction, that of commanding the attention of the reader."—*Spectator*.

"This is a striking and remarkable story, with great originality of plot and vivid delineation of character, drawn by a vigorous hand. The style is earnest and often eloquent, the characters are distinctly drawn, and the interest unflagging."—*Sun*.

"A moving tale, fluently told. * * * All the characters are clearly brought out, and several of them have the distinctness and vividness of personal portraits."—*Saturday Review*.

III.

MAURICE ELVINGTON:

OR, ONE OUT OF SUITS WITH FORTUNE. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Edited by WILFRED EAST. 3 vols.

IV.

BEYMINSTRE.

By the Author of "Lena," "King's Cope," &c. 3 vols.

(Just ready.)

V.

LEONORA. By the Hon. Mrs. MABERLEY. 3 vols.

(In April.)

VI.

ERLESMERE. 2 vols.

(In April.)

Novellettes.

GILBERT MASSENGER. By HOLME LEE,

Author of "Thorney Hall."

One Volume, price 6s. cloth.

"One of the best *novellettes* we have seen. The whole tone of the book is healthy; the sentiments are just and right, and the feelings always beautiful, gentle, and true; the delineation of character is clear, and the style is fresh, flowing, simple, and correct."—*Economist*.

"The writings of this author are remarkable, not only for skill in the construction of a narrative, but for homely, unexaggerated truth of feeling, and perfect naturalness. The subject of 'Gilbert Massenger' is painful, but handled with singular delicacy and truthfulness."—*Examiner*.

"The tale exhibits Holme Lee to advantage, as a delineator of strongly marked character and of life's hardest trials."—*Press*.

"A fine story. The conception is ennobling, and the author has carried it out with a skill worthy of the idea."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

"A condensed and powerfully written story."—*Athenæum*.

"A work of remarkable skill and power."—*Spectator*.

"The story enthralled and edified the reader."—*Globe*.

MY FIRST SEASON. By BEATRICE REYNOLDS.

Edited by the Author of "Charles Auchester" and "Counterparts."

One Vol. Post 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

"A very well-written story, ingenious in its construction, bold and vigorous in its delineation of character, graphic in its descriptive passages, and 'as full of spirit as the month of May.' The interest of the book is sustained by the rapidity and subtlety of the dialogue, by the flash and sparkle of a poetic fancy, by the graphic pictures of life and manners, and above all, by the skilful portraiture of human character."—*Morning Post*.

"The story is ingenious, spirited, and well developed; the dialogue sparkles with talent, and the pages are crowded with satirical sketching, and close, clever presentations of life and character, drawn with artistic skill. The narrative is always in movement, the style terse and pointed, and the whole book remarkable for its keen satire and general cleverness."—*Press*.

"A story of remarkable excellence. It is a masterly performance, and belongs, by its intrinsic merits alone, to the highest order of this class of fiction."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

A LOST LOVE. By ASHFORD OWEN.

One Volume, Post 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

"A tale at once moving and winning, natural and romantic, and certain to raise all the finer sympathies of the reader's nature. Its deep, pure sentiment, admirable style and composition, will win for it a lasting place in English fiction, as one of the truest and most touching pictures ever drawn of woman's love."—*Press*.

"A 'Lost Love' is a story full of grace and genius. We recommend our readers to get the book for themselves. No outline of the story would give them any idea of its beauty."—*Athenæum*.

"A striking and original story; a work of genius and sensibility. The character of the heroine is noble, and her history touching."—*Saturday Review*.

"A real picture of a woman's life."—*Westminster Review*.

"A novel of great genius."—*New Quarterly Review*.

THORNEY HALL: A Story of an Old Family.

By HOLME LEE, Author of "Maude Talbot."

Small post 8vo, price 6s. cloth.

"There is much quiet power evinced in 'Thorney Hall,' combined with a thoroughly healthy and invigorating tone of thought. It develops the practical heroism that lies in the most unromantic duties of daily life. The story is extremely interesting."—*Athenæum*.

"Few who read this tale but will feel that they are reading something true, and that they have known the characters."—*Guardian*.

"A story which sustains to the end so unflinching an interest that few will leave it unfinished."—*Morning Chronicle*.

"One of the most charming novels of its class which has issued from the English press for a long time past."—*Leader*.

New Works. SERMONS.

BY THE LATE REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON, A.M.,
Incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton.

Second Edition, Post 8vo, price 9s. cloth.

"We should be glad if all preachers more united with ourselves preached such sermons as those contained in this volume."—*Christian Remembrancer*.

"Very excellent sermons, full of earnest piety and love to God, and throwing light on many difficulties in Holy Scripture."—*Morning Chronicle*.

"They are very beautiful in feeling, and occasionally striking and forcible in conception to a remarkable degree."—*Guardian*.

A SECOND SERIES OF SERMONS.

BY THE LATE REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON,
Of Brighton.

Second Edition, price 9s. cloth.

"Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, is a name familiar to most of us, and honoured by all to whom it is familiar. A true servant of Christ, a bold and heart-stirring preacher of the Gospel, his teaching was beautified and intensified by genius. New truth, new light, streamed from each well-worn text when he handled it. The present volume is rich in evidence of his piety, manly, and soaring faith, and of his power not only to point to heaven, but to lead the way."—*Globe*.

SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS OF THE LATE LORD METCALFE.

Edited by JOHN WILLIAM KAYE, Esq.

Demy 8vo, price 16s. cloth.

"We commend this volume to all persons who like to study state papers, in which the practical sense of a man of the world is joined to the speculative sagacity of a philosophical statesman. No Indian Library should be without it."—*Press*.

"Too much praise cannot be given to Mr. Kaye for the judgment he has displayed in selecting the pearls of great price from among so much that was truly valuable."—*Leader*.

THE FIBROUS PLANTS OF INDIA FITTED FOR CORDAGE, CLOTHING, AND PAPER.

BY DR. J. FORBES ROYLE.

8vo, price 12s. cloth.

"Dr. Royle has brought together a vast amount of information hitherto scattered, and has thus rendered a most seasonable service to the English public by pointing out inexhaustible supplies of fibrous materials, and not a less important one to the East India Company."—*Edinburgh Review*.

"A work in every way worthy of the high reputation which the author bears."—*Press*.

FOUR YEARS AT THE COURT OF HENRY VIII.:

Being a Selection of the Despatches of SEBASTIAN GIUSTINIAN,
Venetian Ambassador, 1515-1519.

Translated by RAWDON BROWN.

Two Volumes, Crown 8vo, price One Guinea, cloth.

"These letters throw considerable light upon the customs and feelings, the ambitions and intrigues, which prevailed in civilized Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Apart from their historical value, these two volumes will be interesting to those who seek only a casual amusement."—*Times*.

"These volumes present such a portrait of the times as is nowhere else to be found. They are a most important contribution to the materials for history."—*Quarterly Review*.

New Works.

THE FUR-HUNTERS OF THE FAR WEST.

By ALEXANDER ROSS,

Author of "Adventures in the Columbia River."

Two Volumes, Post 8vo. With Maps and Plates. 21s. cloth.

"Many accounts of hardships and adventures with savage men and beasts will be found in these volumes. There are some striking sketches of landscape and Indian life and character, as well as a great deal of information about the old Fur Trade. The book is of considerable value as a picture of an almost past mode of human existence, as well as for its information upon the Indians of Oregon."—*Spectator*.

THE RUSSO-TURKISH CAMPAIGNS OF
1828-9.

By COL. CHESNEY, R.A., D.C.L., F.R.S.,

Third Edition. Post 8vo, with Maps, price 12s. cloth.

"Colonel Chesney's work is one of great interest, and is the best military account of these campaigns that we have."—*Daily News*.

"The only work on the subject suited to the military reader."—*United Service Gazette*.

MILITARY FORCES AND INSTITUTIONS
OF GREAT BRITAIN.

By H. BYERLEY THOMSON, Esq., of the Inner Temple.

8vo, price 15s. cloth.

"Such a book is much wanted, and it contains a great mass of information on military topics, now undergoing daily discussion."—*Economist*.

"A well arranged and carefully digested compilation, giving a clear insight into the economy of the army, and the working of our military system."—*Spectator*.

A MANUAL OF THE MERCANTILE LAW
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

By LEONE LEVI, Esq.,

Author of "Commercial Law of the World."

8vo, price 12s. cloth.

"Sound, clear, and practical. The topics are, international commerce, restraints on trade, patents, copyright, joint-stock and banking companies, partnership, bills of exchange, and limited liability. It is a hand-book for law chambers, offices, and counting houses; requisite in most of such places, and superfluous in none."—*Athenæum*.

"We recommend to all merchants and tradesmen, and to all who are studying great questions of social reform, this Manual of Mercantile Law. Its simplicity and faithfulness make it an extremely serviceable book."—*Examiner*.

THE LAWS OF WAR AFFECTING
COMMERCE AND SHIPPING.

By H. BYERLEY THOMSON, Esq., of the Inner Temple.

Second Edition, greatly enlarged. 8vo, price 4s. 6d., boards.

"Mr. Thomson treats of the immediate effects of war; of enemies and hostile property; of prizes and privateers; of licenses, ransom, recapture, and salvage; of neutrality, contraband of war, blockade, right of search, armed neutralities, &c., &c. Such books as this are essentially necessary to tell us what the laws of nations were, and what they are likely to become; and merchants will find Mr. Thomson's book a great help. It is a well-timed and appropriate publication."—*Economist*.

New Works.**PRACTICAL HINTS FOR INVESTING
MONEY;**

With an Explanation of the Mode of Transacting Business
on the Stock Exchange.

By FRANCIS PLAYFORD, SWORN BROKER.

Second Edition, post 8vo, price 2s. 6d., cloth.

A VISIT TO SEBASTOPOL A WEEK AFTER ITS FALL.

By an OFFICER of the Anglo-Turkish Contingent.

Fcap., price 1s.

"This interesting narrative enjoys the honour of being a book for the whole people, rich and poor; telling, and telling well, what none of us yet tire to hear."—*Examiner*.

MEMORANDUMS MADE IN IRELAND.

By SIR JOHN FORBES, M.D.

Two Vols., Post 8vo, price 1l. 1s. cloth.

"The book is excellent, and, like all the writings of its author, points to a good purpose. It is honest, thoughtful, liberal, and kindly. By readers of all grades Dr. Forbes's volumes will be read with pleasure."—*Examiner*.

BALDER. A POEM.

By the Author of "The Roman."

2nd Edit, with Preface by the Author. 1 vol. cr. 8vo, 7s. 6d. cl.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF A FAG.

By GEORGE MELLY. *Post 8vo, price 7s. cloth*

**DOINE; or, the NATIONAL SONGS AND LEGENDS OF
ROUMANIA.**

Translated by E. C. GRENVILLE MURRAY, Esq.

With Specimens of the Music. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth, or 9s. cloth gilt.

Works of Leigh Hunt.**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT.**

3 vols. Post 8vo, 15s. cloth.

MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS. 2 vols., 10s. cloth.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY. 5s. cloth.

WIT AND HUMOUR. 5s. cloth.

A JAR OF HONEY FROM MOUNT HYBLA. 5s. cloth.

TABLE TALK. 3s. 6d. cloth

Works of Thackeray.

LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH HUMOURISTS OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

By W. M. THACKERAY, Esq.,
Author of "Vanity Fair," "The Newcomes," &c.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, price 10s. 6d. cloth.

"To those who attended the lectures, the book will be a pleasant reminiscence to others an exciting novelty. The style—clear, idiomatic, forcible, familiar, but never slovenly; the searching strokes of sarcasm or irony; the occasional flashes of generous scorn; the touches of pathos, pity, and tenderness; the morality tempered but never weakened by experience and sympathy; the felicitous phrases, the striking anecdotes, the passages of wise, practical reflection; all these lose much less than we could have expected from the absence of the voice, manner, and look of the lecturer."—*Spectator*.

ESMOND. By W. M. THACKERAY, Esq.

Second Edition, 3 vols., Crown 8vo, reduced to 15s. cloth.

"Mr. Thackeray has selected for his hero a very noble type of the cavalier softening into the man of the eighteenth century, and for his heroine one of the sweetest women that ever breathed from canvas or from book, since Raffaele painted and Shakspeare wrote. The style is manly, clear, terse, and vigorous, reflecting every mood—pathetic, graphic, or sarcastic—of the writer."—*Spectator*.

THE ROSE AND THE RING; or, THE HISTORY OF PRINCE GIGLIO AND PRINCE BULBO.

By MR. M. A. TITMARSH.

With 58 Cuts drawn by the Author. 3rd Edition, price 5s.

THE KICKLEBURYS ON THE RHINE.

By MR. M. A. TITMARSH.

With 15 Cuts. Third Edit., price 5s. plain, and 7s. 6d. coloured.

A PORTRAIT OF W. M. THACKERAY, ESQ.

Engraved by Francis Holl, from a Drawing by Samuel
Laurence. *India Proofs, 2l. 2s.; Prints, 1l. 1s.*

Miss Kavanagh's Works.

WOMEN OF CHRISTIANITY EXEMPLARY FOR PIETY AND CHARITY.

Post 8vo, with Portraits, price 12s. in embossed cloth, gilt edges.

"A more noble and dignified tribute to the virtues of her sex we can scarcely imagine than this work, to which the gifted authoress has brought talents of no ordinary range, and, more than all, a spirit of eminent piety."—*Church of England Quarterly Review*.

WOMAN IN FRANCE DURING THE 18TH CENTURY.

2 vols. Post 8vo, with Eight Portraits, 12s. in embossed cloth.

"Miss Kavanagh has undertaken a delicate task, and she has performed it on the whole with discretion and judgment. Her volumes may lie on any drawing-room table without scandal, and may be read by all but her youngest countrywomen without risk."—*Quarterly Review*.

GRACE LEE. By JULIA KAVANAGH.

3 vols. Post 8vo, price 31s. 6d. cloth.

"A remarkable fiction, abounding in romantic incidents."—*Morning Post*.

Works of Currer Bell.

VILLETTE. BY CURRER BELL.

New Edition, in One Volume, Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth.

"This novel amply sustains the fame of the author of 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley' as an original and powerful writer."—*Examiner*.

SHIRLEY. BY CURRER BELL.

Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth.

"The peculiar power which was so greatly admired in 'Jane Eyre' is not absent from this book. It possesses deep interest, and an irresistible grasp of reality. There are scenes which enable this tale to stand boldly out from the mass, and to assume its own place in the bright field of romantic literature."—*Times*.

JANE EYRE. BY CURRER BELL.

Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. 6s. cloth.

"'Jane Eyre' is a remarkable production. Freshness and originality, truth and poetic singular felicity in the description of natural scenery, and in the analysis of human thought enable this tale to stand boldly out from the mass, and to assume its own place in the bright field of romantic literature."—*Times*.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND AGNES GREY

BY ELLIS AND ACTON BELL.

With a Biographical Notice of both Authors, by CURRER BELL.

Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth.

POEMS. BY CURRER, ELLIS, and ACTON BELL.

4s. cloth.

Talbot Gwynne's Fictions.

NANETTE AND HER LOVERS

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"We do not remember to have met with so perfect a work of literary art as 'Nanette' for many a long day; or one in which every character is so thoroughly worked out in so short space, and the interest concentrated with so much effect and truthfulness."—*Britannia*.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SILAS
BARNSTARKE.

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A story possessing an interest so tenacious that no one who commences it will easily leave the perusal unfinished."—*Standard*.

"A book of high aim and unquestionable power."—*Examiner*.

THE SCHOOL FOR FATHERS.

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"The pleasantest tale we have read for many a day. It is a story of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* days, and is very fitly associated with that time of good English literature by its manly, direct, unaffected manner of writing, and nicely managed, well-turned narrative. The descriptions are excellent; some of the country painting is as fresh as a landscape by Constable, or idyll by Alfred Tennyson."—*Examiner*.

THE SCHOOL FOR DREAMERS

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A powerful and skilfully-written book, intended to show the mischief and danger of following imagination instead of judgment in the practical business of life."—*Literary Gazette*.

Oriental.

THE BHILSA TOPES; or, BUDDHIST MONUMENTS OF CENTRAL INDIA.

By MAJOR CUNNINGHAM.

One Volume, 8vo, with Thirty-three Plates, price 30s. cloth.

"Of the Topes opened in various parts of India none have yielded so rich a harvest of important information as those of Bhilsa, opened by Major Cunningham and Lieut. Maisey; and which are described, with an abundance of highly curious graphic illustrations, in this most interesting book."—*Examiner*.

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES IN ASSAM.

By MAJOR JOHN BUTLER.

One Volume 8vo, with Plates, price 12s. cloth.

"This volume is unusually successful in creating an interest on an Eastern subject. It is illustrated by views of landscapes, figures and antiquities."—*Press*.

"Fourteen years' residence among the half-civilized natives have given the author—whose powers of observation, penetration, and analysis are of no ordinary kind—ample opportunities of studying the character of the Hill tribes of Assam."—*Britannia*.

THE ENGLISH IN WESTERN INDIA;

Being the Early History of the Factory at Surat, of Bombay.

By PHILIP ANDERSON, A.M.

Second Edition, 8vo, price 14s. cloth.

"Quaint, curious, and amusing, this volume describes, from old manuscripts and obscure books, the life of English merchants in an Indian Factory. It contains fresh and amusing gossip, all bearing on events and characters of historical importance."—*Athenæum*.

"A book of permanent value."—*Guardian*.

HISTORY OF THE SUPPRESSION OF INFANTICIDE IN WESTERN INDIA,

By JOHN WILSON, D.D., F.R.S.

Demy 8vo, price 12s.

"Dr. Wilson's volume contains a luminous exposition of the whole subject, which it examines from every point of view."—*Athenæum*.

JOURNAL OF THE SUTLEJ CAMPAIGN OF 1845-6.

By JAMES COLEY, M.A.

Fcap. 8vo, price 4s. cloth.

"Frankness is the main characteristic of Mr. Coley's Journal. He lays bare the practical irreligion of India with an undissembling pen."—*Spectator*.

LAURIE'S PEGU:

A NARRATIVE OF THE CONCLUDING OPERATIONS OF THE
SECOND BURMESE WAR.

*One thick Volume, Post 8vo, with numerous Plans and Views,
price 14s. cloth.*

Oriental.

BOYD'S TURKISH INTERPRETER:
A GRAMMAR OF THE TURKISH LANGUAGE. 8vo, price 12s.

CRAWFURD'S GRAMMAR & DICTIONARY
OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE. 2 vols. 8vo, 36s.
cloth.

ROBERTS'S INDIAN EXCHANGE TABLES.
8vo. *Second Edition, enlarged, price 10s. 6d. cloth.*

BRIDGNELL'S INDIAN COMMERCIAL
TABLES OF WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND
MONEY. *Royal 8vo, price 21s., half-bound.*

SMALL'S MERCANTILE TABLES OF
BENGAL PRODUCE. 4to, price 2l. 10s. *cloth.*

THE BOMBAY QUARTERLY REVIEW.
Nos. 1 to 5. *Price 5s. each.*

THE CALCUTTA REVIEW, No. XLIX.
Price 6s.

BAILLIE'S LAND TAX OF INDIA.
According to the Moohummudan Law. 8vo, price 6s. *cl.*

BAILLIE'S MOOHUMMUDAN LAW OF
SALE. 8vo, price 14s. *cloth.*

IRVING'S THEORY AND PRACTICE OF
CASTE. *Post 8vo, price 5s. cloth.*

DR. ROYLE ON THE CULTURE AND
COMMERCE OF COTTON IN INDIA.
8vo, 18s. *cloth.*

GINGELL'S CEREMONIAL USAGES OF
THE CHINESE. *Imperial 8vo, price 9s. cloth.*

SMYTH'S HISTORY OF THE REIGNING
FAMILY OF LAHORE. *With Portraits.* 8vo,
price 12s.

Miscellaneous.

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL'S ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS MADE AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.
4to, with Plates, price 4l. 4s. cloth.

DARWIN'S GEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS ON CORAL REEFS, VOLCANIC ISLANDS, AND ON SOUTH AMERICA.
8vo, with Maps, Plates, and Woodcuts, 10s. 6d. cloth.

LEVY'S COMMERCIAL LAW OF THE WORLD.
Two Vols., Royal 4to, price 6l. cloth.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY. By M. HILL and C. F. CORNWALLIS. *Post 8vo, price 6s. cloth.*

WARING'S MANUAL OF THERAPEUTICS. *One thick Vol., Foolscap 8vo (755 pp.) Price 12s. 6d. cloth.*

DOUBLEDAY'S TRUE LAW OF POPULATION.
Third Edition, 8vo, 10s. cloth.

SWAINSON'S ACCOUNT OF AUCKLAND. *Post 8vo, with a View and Coloured Map, 6s. cloth.*

McCANN'S TWO THOUSAND MILES' RIDE THROUGH THE ARGENTINE PROVINCES, &c.
Two Vols., Post 8vo, with Illustrations. Price 24s. cloth.

TRAITS OF AMERICAN INDIAN LIFE. *Post 8vo, price 7s. cloth.*

ROWCROFT'S TALES OF THE COLONIES. *Fifth Edition. 6s. cloth.*

GOETHE'S CONVERSATIONS WITH ECKERMANN.
Translated by JOHN OXENFORD. 2 Vols. post 8vo, 10s. cl.

CHORLEY'S MODERN GERMAN MUSIC. *Two Vols., Post 8vo, price 21s. cloth.*

DALLAS'S POETICS: AN ESSAY ON POETRY.
Crown 8vo, price 9s. cloth.

HUGHES'S DUTIES OF JUDGE ADVOCATES. *Post 8vo, 7s. cloth.*

THE INSURRECTION IN CHINA. By Dr. YVAN and M. CALLERY. *Translated by JOHN OXENFORD. Third Edition. Post 8vo, with Chinese Map and Portrait, 7s. 6d. cloth.*

KESSON'S CROSS AND THE DRAGON; OR, THE FORTUNES OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA. *Post 8vo, 6s. cloth.*

Miscellaneous.

POEMS. By WILLIAM BELL SCOTT. *Foolscap 8vo, with Three Plates, price 5s. cloth.*

POEMS. By WALTER R. CASSELS. *Foolscap 8vo, price 3s. 6d. cloth.*

GARLANDS OF VERSE. By THOMAS LEIGH. *Foolscap 8vo, 5s. cloth.*

THE BRITISH OFFICER; HIS POSITION, DUTIES, EMOLUMENTS, AND PRIVILEGES. By J. H. STOCQUELER. *Post 8vo, 15s. cloth extra.*

THE NOVITIATE; OR, THE JESUIT IN TRAINING. By ANDREW STEINMETZ. *Third Edition. Post 8vo, 5s. cloth.*

A CONVERTED ATHEIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY. *Fourth Edition. Foolscap 8vo, price 3s. cloth.*

THE RECTORY OF VALEHEAD. By the Rev. R. W. EVANS. *Fourteenth Edition. 3s. cloth.*

MORISON'S RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF MAN. *Second Edition. Foolscap, 3s. cloth.*

PARENTS' CABINET OF AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION. *In volumes, each complete in itself, 2s. 6d.*

LITTLE STORIES FROM THE PARLOUR PRINTING PRESS. By the Author of the "Parents' Cabinet." *2s. cloth.*

ELEMENTARY WORKS ON SOCIAL ECONOMY. *Uniform in Foolscap 8vo, half-bound.*

I.—OUTLINES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY. *1s. 6d.*

II.—PROGRESSIVE LESSONS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE. *1s. 6d.*

III.—INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. *2s.*

IV.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE ARRANGEMENTS AND RELATIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE. *2s. 6d.*

V.—OUTLINES OF THE UNDERSTANDING. *2s.*

VI.—WHAT AM I? WHERE AM I? WHAT OUGHT I TO DO? &c. *1s. sewed.*

GREEN'S BRITISH MERCHANTS' ASSISTANT.

CONTAINING :—

PART I.—TABLES OF SIMPLE INTEREST at 3, 3½, 4, 4½, and 5 per cent.

PART II.—TABLES OF INTEREST ON EXCHEQUER BILLS, at from 1½d. to 3½d. per cent per diem.

PART III.—TABLES OF ENGLISH & FOREIGN STOCK, BROKERAGE, COMMISSION, FREIGHT, INSURANCE, &c.

Royal 8vo, 1l. 11s. 6d. cloth. (Each part may be had separately.)





